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HÄGERSTRÖM'S ACCOUNT OF SENSE OF DUTY AND CERTAIN ALLIED EXPERIENCES[1]

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THE Swedish philosopher Hägerström, who was professor in Uppsala during the first quarter of the present century, devoted much attention to the philosophical and psychological analysis of moral and legal phenomena. Hägerström is a difficult writer. He had steeped himself in the works of German philosophers and philosophical jurists, and his professional prose-style both in German and in Swedish had been infected by them so that it resembles glue thickened with sawdust. But he enjoys a very high reputation in his own and adjacent countries, and it seems to me that this is well deserved. I think, therefore, that it may be interesting and useful to try to provide English philosophers with an outline in my own words of Hägerström's doctrines, as I understand them, about the topic named in the title of this paper.

I shall use the name "deontic expression" to denote all sentences which contain as principal verb the word "ought" or some obviously equivalent word or phrase, Hägerström was concerned to describe and analyse the experiences which are expressed by the utterance of such sentences. I will use the name "deontic experience" to denote them. Now he thinks that much light is thrown on this problem by considering what is expressed by such sentences as "I shall do so-and-so," and by such sentences as "Do so-and-so!" We may call these respectively "expressions of intention" and "imperative sentences," and we may call the experiences which

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they respectively express "experiences of intending" and "experiences of commanding and obeying." I shall therefore begin by considering in turn Hägerström's account of these two kinds of experience.

Experiences of Intending. Suppose I have been considering what to do in a certain situation and eventually make a decision which I express by saying "I will do so-and-so," e.g. "I will accept Mr. *X*'s invitation." What am I expressing by uttering such a sentence?

(1) I am certainly *not* expressing merely a predictive judgment about myself, as if I were to say "I shall be dead within the next 50 years." The latter sentence clearly does not express an intention, and any sentence which does so evidently refers in part, at least, to something which already exists. (2) The sentence "I will do so-and-so" certainly does not express merely the introspective judgment which might be expressed by saying "I have just decided to do so-and-so." To be having a certain experience is one thing, and to judge that one is having such an experience is always another thing. The sentence "I will do so-and-so" is the direct expression of an experience of intending, whilst the sentence "I have just decided to do so-and-so" expresses my judgment that I am having or have just had such an experience. (3) Hägerström concludes that the words "I will" in such a sentence express a certain experience of *conative impulse,* and that this is an essential factor in the experience of intending.

He now raises the following question. The sentence "I will do so-and-so" seems *prima facie* to express a judgment, in which a certain predicate, viz. doing so-and-so, is ascribed to a certain subject, viz. myself. For grammatically it is a sentence in the indicative, and its grammatical subject is the word "I" and its grammatical predicate is the phrase "do so-and-so." Now, if the sentence had been "I shall be dead within the next 50 years," there would be no objection to accepting these suggestions of grammar. But we have come to the conclusion that, in uttering an expression of intention, I am expressing, *not* a judgment about myself, but a certain conative impulse which I am feeling. Why, then, do we all express our intentions by uttering sentences in the grammatical form which is appropriate for expressing *judgments*?

Hägerström's answer is as follows. When I utter the sentence "I will do so-and-so" I am expressing a complex experience, composed of two co-existent and intimately linked experiences, one conative and the other cognitive. The conative component is a feeling of impulse, the cognitive component is a thought of myself as doing so-and-so. He holds, apparently, that it is the presence of this cognitive experience, linked with the feeling of impulse, which diverts the expression from taking the form of a mere interjection into

taking the form of a sentence in the indicative. The grammatical form of the utterance then suggests that I am making and expressing a *judgment*, assigning a peculiar kind of predicate to myself as subject. But this suggestion is misleading. Hägerström thinks that sentences in the optative mood, e.g. "Would that Professor *X* would stop talking!" provide another instance of sentences which express a certain feeling intimately linked with a certain thought, viz. here the thought of Professor *X*'s speech coming to an end.

Hägerström suggests that, when one is merely seriously considering doing a certain action, as distinct from being resolved to do it, the idea is linked with a conative impulse similar in kind but of weaker intensity. He suggests that the difference in intensity is connected with the difference on the cognitive side between merely thinking seriously of the possibility of doing the action and fully believing that one will do it. The feature common to all such experiences is the presence of a feeling of conative impulse linked in a certain way with the cognitive experience of entertaining with *some* degree of conviction the proposition that one will do an act of a certain kind.

From this analysis Hägerström draws the conclusion that it is meaningless to apply the notions of logic, e.g. entailment, inconsistency, etc., to intentions. For these notions apply strictly only to judgments, and an expression of intention is not just an expression of a judgment. Suppose, e.g. that I have formed the intention of accepting Mr. *X*'s invitation. To accept his invitation logically entails communicating with him in some way or other, and I may know that the only available way is to write a letter to him. Yet no such feeling of conative impulse may be linked with the thought of sitting down and writing a letter to *X* as is linked with the thought of accepting his invitation. In that case there is no inconsistency in the *logical* sense. For *logic* does not require that, if p entails q and a certain feeling of conative impulse is linked with my thought of p, then the same feeling shall be linked with my thought of q. Nevertheless, Hägerström says, the feeling of conative impulse is in fact very often conveyed by association from one's thought of p to one's thought of q if one realizes that p logically entails q. Suppose a person has decided to seek a certain end E, and that he believes that the only or the best available means is to take the initial action A. Then a feeling of conative impulse, similar to that which is linked with his thought of seeking E, will, in general, be linked by association with his thought of doing A. But, if this should not be so, it is improper to talk of "inconsistency" in the logical sense.

Experiences of Commanding and Obeying. We can now turn to Hägerström's account of experiences of commanding and obeying.

He opens the discussion by raising the question: What state of mind does the issuer of a command seek to bring about in the recipient of it?

He begins by distinguishing a command, on the one hand, from a threat or a warning, on the other. If *A* threatens *B*, he seeks to induce *B* to act or to abstain from acting in a certain way by making *B* believe that he will otherwise bring about consequences which *B* would greatly dislike. If *A* warns *B*, the process is in principle the same, but the unpleasant consequences to *B* will not necessarily be due to *A*'s action. In either case *A* is imagining what it is like to be in *B*'s position and with *B*'s tastes and inclinations. He then tries to persuade *B* that omitting to do the action in question would lead to consequences which *B* would greatly dislike. And he expects that this will arouse in *B* a strong egoistic motive for doing the action.

Now a command, as such, is neither a threat nor a warning, though it may, of course, be combined with, and reinforced by, either or both. It is *not* intended primarily to arouse an egoistic motive for doing the action commanded.

Hägerström then proceeds to make certain other negative statements about the way in which a command acts on the recipient. (1) It does not act by arousing in *B* the belief that *A* wishes or intends him to do the action commanded. This belief, if it occurs, is merely an inference which *B* may or may not make. Even if he does make it, this belief will influence *B*'s action only if he has some motive, direct or indirect, for acting in accordance with *A*'s wishes or intentions. If this were the way in which a command worked, the person who issued it might just as well have uttered a promise or a threat or a recommendation or a warning. Then, again, from the point of view of the utterer of a command, what he is doing is certainly not just to express a wish or an intention. If it were, the appropriate expression would be, not a sentence in the imperative, but either one in the optative "Would that you would do so-and-so!" or an expression of intention "I will make you do so-and-so." Now a person often utters a command and is obeyed when he knows perfectly well that he has no means of *making* the other person do what he orders if the latter should prove disobedient.

Hägerström concludes that a command acts by producing in the recipient, *directly* and without appeal to motives based on his likes and dislikes, an intention to do the act commanded. In accordance with the analysis of intention given above, this means that receiving the command directly evokes in the hearer a feeling of conative impulse linked with the thought of acting in the way described.

We can, however, distinguish three different ways of reacting to a command, and Hägerström thinks that the characteristic experience

occurs only or most markedly with the third of them. At the lowest level reception of a command simply sets off the action required by a kind of conditioned reflex without the idea of it being present in the recipient's mind. The obedience of trained soldiers on parade to the ordinary words of command is of this nature. At a slightly higher level the effect of receiving the command is primarily to evoke the idea of the action commanded and to repress all ideas of alternative modes of behaving. This one idea then simply realizes itself *ideo-motively*. The characteristic experience of obeying a command does not emerge clearly in either of these cases. It does so only at the third level. Here thoughts of alternative modes of behaving are present, just because they do appeal to this, that or another of the recipient's desires or aversions. The effect of the command is then to produce directly the intention to do the alternative commanded, and to suppress the tendency of the other impulses to develop into intentions. Cf., e.g., the case of a boy forbidden by his mother to eat any more chocolates, and obeying, although he is very conscious of a desire to eat more.

We can now pass to Hägerström's account of the experiences of a person who issues a command. According to what has gone before, the words "I will" express the actual existence of a state of intention in the speaker, whilst the words "Thou shalt!" evoke directly a state of intention in a suitably situated hearer. But Hägerström proceeds to develop his theory as follows. He says that, if *A* addresses an imperative sentence to *B*, it will not be effective unless it appears to *B* to be expressive of a real intention in *A*, viz., an intention that *B* shall act in the way commanded. This must be carefully distinguished from an intention in *A* to make *B* act in that way. The latter intention may or may not exist. If it does, it would be expressed by saying "I will make you do so-and-so" and not by saying "Do so-and-so!" Now, in general, *B* will not be led to believe that *A* really means him to do *X*, when he utters the imperative sentence "Do *X*!" unless *A* does in fact have that intention in regard to *B*'s action.

I think that this part of the theory may be put as follows. If *A*'s command to *B* is to be effective, *B* must believe that it is meant seriously. And in general *A* will not manage to utter the imperative sentence in such a way as to convey that impression to *B* unless he does in fact mean it seriously. Now, so far, we have considered under the name "intention" only an intention in a person concerning *his own* action, i.e., the kind of experience which he would express by saying "I will do *X*." But now we have to consider an intention in *A* concerning an action by *B*, i.e., the kind of situation which a third party might describe by saying that *A* intends *B* to do *X*. Hägerström's view is that this consists in *A* having a

feeling of conative impulse linked with his thought of *B* doing this action, and that the feeling and the linkage are of the same nature as when he has an intention to do an action himself. The difference is simply that in the former case the feeling is linked with *A*'s thought of *B* doing *X* instead of with his thought of *himself* doing *X*. The natural expression of the former state is an imperative sentence "Do *X*!" addressed to *B*; the natural expression of the latter state is a sentence of the form "I will do *X*."

In order to deal with this development of Hägerström's doctrine it will be convenient to proceed as follows. We will say that an experience of intending, in the widest sense, always consists of a feeling of conative impulse linked in a certain way with the thought of a certain person performing a certain action. But it may be either *reflexive* or *transitive*. It is reflexive if the thought is of *oneself* as doing the act. The natural expression of a reflexive intention is a sentence of the kind "I will do so-and-so." It is transitive if the thought is of a certain *other person* as doing the act. The natural expression of a transitive intention is a sentence of the kind "Do so-and-so!" addressed to the person in question. The effect of this on a suitably conditioned recipient is to evoke directly in him a reflexive intention, which *he* would naturally express by saying "I will do so-and-so."

There are three remarks to be added before we leave this topic. (1) Hägerström thinks that a person often says to himself "I will do so-and-so" in order to strengthen in himself by auto-suggestion an already existing, but weak or wavering, reflexive intention. In such cases he is doing to himself something which is analogous to giving an order to another. (2) He thinks that the first person plural of the imperative mood, e.g., "Let us pray!" illustrates the close connexion between an intention and a command. The speaker is at once expressing his own intention to do a certain act and expecting this expression to evoke directly in his hearers an intention to co-operate with him. (3) The reception of a command may evoke in the recipient a conative impulse linked with the thought of doing the act commanded, but this impulse may be too weak to constitute a reflexive intention. In that case, as in the case where a command *is* effective, the recipient will feel himself to be to some extent *constrained* in his volitions. For impulses to do various alternative actions, based on their appeal to his various likes and dislikes, will be in conflict with the impulse to do the action commanded, which arises in a totally different way analogous to hypnotic suggestion.

Deontic Experiences. We are now in a position to consider Hägerström's account of deontic experiences. The fact that it has been common to interpret duty in terms of imperatives suggests that there is some analogy between deontic experiences and the

experience of receiving a command. Moreover, when a person's sense of duty is aroused, he does feel under a kind of compulsion in regard to a certain action, and expressions like "bound to" and "under an obligation to" seem to point to a conative impulse not dependent on the agent's likes and dislikes. On the other hand, it must be admitted that deontic expressions are often used where a person is merely expressing a valuation of an action by reference to his desires and aversions. One may say, e.g. "I ought to have taken the first turning to the left," when one means merely that this would have been the most convenient way to the place which one wanted to reach. The question therefore arises whether a feeling of duty is of the same nature as the feelings which are at the basis of our likes and dislikes or whether it is of the nature of a conative impulse such as Hägerström believes to be present in experiences of reflexive intention, of commanding, and of obeying.

In favour of the former alternative are the following facts. Suppose a person believes that the doing of act *X* is necessary either to avoid something which he would greatly dislike or to secure something which he highly values. Suppose further that the act *X* in itself is indifferent or repulsive to him. Then he does feel a kind of inner compulsion towards doing and in doing *X*. A typical example would be paying money to a blackmailer. When a person acts from a sense of duty may not the feeling of compulsion be due to the act being one which is in itself indifferent or repulsive to him, but is chosen by him as the only means available for avoiding what he would strongly dislike or securing what he would highly value?

Hägerström rejects this on the following grounds. (1) All these conditions may be fulfilled to the highest degree, e.g., in the case of being blackmailed, and yet the feeling of compulsion may *not* present itself as a feeling of duty to do the act. A person feels under a *moral* compulsion to take the unpleasant means only when he feels under a moral obligation to seek the end to which they are indispensable. E.g., a father of a family might feel himself under a *moral* compulsion to pay money to a blackmailer if he felt under a moral obligation to save his wife and children from distress and ruin. (2) It is plainly idle to suggest that the unpleasant consequence to be avoided is the pangs of guilty conscience. For, in the first place, unless I already have a feeling of obligation to do a certain act, I shall not expect to feel the pangs of guilt or remorse if I omit to do it. And, secondly, just in so far as I realized that my sole reason for doing *X* was the desire to avoid the unpleasant feelings which would attend my consciousness of having omitted to do it, I should *not* have the experience of doing *X* from a sense of *duty*. (3) It is equally unsatisfactory to suggest that the valued end which one seeks to secure by taking the unattractive means is self-approval

or approval by others. For, in the first place, self-approval must here be specifically *moral*, and the approval of others must be approval which I regard as *deserved*. Otherwise the act cannot possibly appear to the agent as done from a sense of duty. And, secondly, a person cannot expect to feel *moral* self-approval in respect of an action, nor to feel that the approval of others is *deserved*, unless he has acted from a sense of duty. All such attempted explanations of action from a sense of duty presuppose what they profess to explain.

Hägerström's conclusion is this. The only possible account of action from a sense of duty is that it involves an impulse towards a certain action which is felt to be compulsive, because it is determined, *not* by the agent's likes, dislikes, and valuations, but by something which is, so far as concerns them, *external* to him. If so, the analogy with acting on a command is obvious. Both experiences involve a conative impulse which arises independently of appeals to the subject's likes, dislikes, valuations, etc., and which is directly linked with the thought of a certain action.

Deontic Sentences in the Indicative. We can now pass to the next stage in Hägerström's argument. This is concerned with what I will call "deontic sentences in the indicative." We have seen that what is expressed by a sentence in the imperative, e.g., "Do so-and-so!" cannot be expressed naturally by any sentence in the indicative. We have also seen that the expression of a reflexive intention "I will do so-and-so," though grammatically similar to "I shall be dead within 50 years," cannot be treated as an ordinary sentence in the indicative expressing the judgment that a certain subject has a certain predicate. But in the case of deontic experiences the situation is expressed quite naturally by what looks like an ordinary sentence in the indicative, e.g., "So-and-so is my duty" or "I am under an obligation to do so-and-so." Now the *prima facie* interpretation of this linguistic fact is to suppose that the feeling of duty makes a person aware of a peculiar kind of predicate which qualifies either himself in relation to a certain act or a certain act in relation to himself. The deontic sentence in the indicative is then naturally regarded as expressing a judgment that the action or the agent has this peculiar predicate. Hägerström proceeds to investigate this *prima facie* interpretation of the linguistic facts.

If we consider any action which is held to be a duty in given circumstances, we shall generally be able to mention certain *non-deontic* characteristics of it, e.g. its being the fulfilment of a promise, which *make* it a duty in the circumstances. Let us call these "deontifying characteristics." None of these deontifying characteristics can be *identified with* the supposed property of being a duty. Nevertheless, many people would say that the fact that we naturally

use sentences like "This act is obligatory upon me" shows that we *are* aware of a certain peculiar predicate and that we *do* judge that it belongs to a certain action. Hägerström holds that this is a mistake.

His preliminary answer is that the example of expressions of intention, like "I will do so-and-so," suffices to show that a sentence in the indicative is not always an expression for a judgment. He then turns to the special case under discussion, viz., the sentence "This action is a duty." He takes this to be equivalent to "This action ought to be." He then uses an abstract argument, which seems to me to come to the following. In ascribing *any* predicate to a subject we presuppose that that subject exists. But when I say "So-and-so ought to be" I certainly do not presuppose that so-and-so exists. I admit that that which I declare ought to exist may never exist, and I hold that the question whether it does or does not is irrelevant. Hägerström therefore concludes that the indicative sentence "So-and-so ought to be" cannot express a judgment in which a predicate denoted by the phrase "ought-to-be" is assigned to a subject denoted by the phrase "so-and-so."

If this is Hägerström's argument, it resembles one used by Prichard. I must confess that I find it inconclusive for the following two reasons. (1) It is not at all obvious that the natural expression "I ought to do so-and-so" can or should be replaced by the expression "So-and-so ought to be." Now the former sentence seems *prima facie* to express a judgment in which a predicate denoted by the phrase "being under an obligation to do so-and-so" is ascribed to a subject denoted by the word "I." Now *I* exist, even if I should never do the action in question. (2) Even if we allow the translation into "So-and-so ought to be," the argument seems to me to be a mare's nest. It might be compared with the following bogus difficulty which might be raised about such a negative existential sentence as "Dragons do not exist." It might be said that this is self-contradictory; for, unless there were dragons, one could not ascribe *any* predicate to them and therefore not non-existence. The answer is, not that the sentence "Dragons do not exist" does not express a judgment at all, but that it expresses a judgment of a radically different kind from that which is expressed by the grammatically similar sentence "Pigs do not fly." Its subject, in fact, is not anything *denoted* by the word "dragons," but is whatever set of attributes we take to be *connoted* by that word, e.g. the property of being a serpent which has wings and breathes flame. And what it asserts is that this complex attribute has no instances. Now I should have thought that the sentence "So-and-so ought to be" could *prima facie* be treated on similar lines. The subject would be a set of attributes describing a certain possible action or state of

affairs. What is asserted of it is that it ought to have an instance; and this neither entails nor excludes that it does have instances.

However this may be, Hägerström concludes that deontic sentences in the indicative do not and cannot express judgments in which a peculiar predicate, denoted by some such phrase as "ought-to-be," is ascribed to a subject. What lies behind them is simply a conative impulse directly linked with the idea of a certain action in the way already described in discussing expressions of intention and imperative sentences.

The question at once arises: Why should we express this particular kind of mixed conative and cognitive experience by a sentence in the indicative, which inevitably suggests by its grammatical form that we are making a judgment in which we are ascribing a unique kind of predicate to an act? Hägerström's answer, if I am not mistaken, is as follows.

What causes the expression to take this grammatical form is that the *cognitive* element is predominant at the time. One is thinking of the special *factual* character of the action in relation to the circumstances, e.g. of its being the fulfilment of a promise. This forces the expression of the mixed conative and cognitive experience into a form of words which is appropriate to the expression of a judgment assigning a peculiar predicate to the action contemplated.

Now we must notice the following two facts about such utterances. (1) They are not sentences which we deliberately construct, as one does when using an unfamiliar language or trying to convey in one's own language something to a foreigner who is imperfectly acquainted with it. They arise automatically to our lips on the occasion of a deontic experience. (2) A person does not utter such sentences as an isolated individual. Their form is determined by his membership of a community in which other members automatically express their deontic experiences in a similar way. In consequence of their automatic and extra-individual character such utterances have much the same properties as those which really do express judgments. Now this leads one, by a very natural association, to take for granted that deontic sentences in the indicative do express judgments. So there arises in the mind of the speaker a kind of image of the experience which he has when he really is making a judgment and expressing it by a sentence in the indicative. Let us call this an "experience of *quasi*-judging."

When a person has such an experience he naturally takes for granted that there is a peculiar kind of objective *fact* corresponding to it, in the way in which, e.g. the historical fact that Charles I was executed corresponds to the genuine judgment which I should express by saying "Charles I was executed." The *subject* of this assumed deontic fact is naturally taken to be the action in connexion

with the thought of which the feeling of moral compulsion is experienced. But what is supposed to be the *predicate*, which the phrase "ought to be done" is assumed to denote? Any *non-deontic* predicate which might be suggested obviously will not do, for then the alleged judgment would naturally be expressed by an indicative sentence with a non-deontic word or phrase as its grammatical predicate. Actually there is one and only one way in which a person who is having an experience of deontic *quasi*-judging can present the alleged predicate to himself. He can think of it only as that which answers to the description "that predicate, whatever it may be, which the phrase 'ought to be done' denotes in the sentence 'This action ought to be done.' " Of course, if Hägerström be right, there is nothing answering to this description, just as there is nothing answering to the description "the national fraction whose square is equal to 2." But in either case we can understand the description, and in that sense and in that only one can be said to think of that which it ostensibly describes.

Ascription of Duties to other Persons. The account of deontic experiences which we have so far considered applies to those which are expressed by a deontic indicative in the first person singular, viz. "*I* ought to do so-and-so." But there are, of course, deontic indicatives in the second and in the third person. *A* may say to *B* "*You* ought to do so-and-so," or he may say of *B* "*He* ought to do so-and-so." What sort of experiences are expressed by such sentences? Can a similar account be given of them?

In answering this question Hägerström refers to the experience which he alleges to be present in a person who issues an order to another, i.e., what I have called a "transitive intention." He holds that when *A* says to *B* "You ought to do so-and-so" there is in *A* a feeling of conative impulse of the same kind as that which is present when he says "I ought to do so-and-so." But in this case it is linked with *A*'s thought of *B* doing the action instead of being linked with his thought of himself as doing the action. The feeling is of the same kind and the linkage is of the same kind; the difference is in the content of the thought with which the feeling is linked.

Hägerström explains the experience of moral indignation by reference to this transitive deontic feeling of conative impulse. Suppose, e.g., that *A* has this feeling linked with his thought of *B* keeping his promise to *C*. Suppose he becomes aware that *B* has broken his promise to *C*. Then this conative impulse of *A*'s is thwarted, and he reacts by a feeling of indignation towards *B*. Such indignation is specifically moral.

Rightness and Sense of Duty. Our ordinary language suggests that there is a peculiar property called "rightness," with a contrary opposite called "wrongness," which belongs to certain actions, and

that this property is intimately connected with sense of duty. It would commonly be said that a person feels a duty to do a certain act if and only if he believes that it is *right* in the circumstances. It might, indeed, be said that he feels it a duty to keep his promises, to return true answers to questions, and so on. But he does so only in so far as he believes that promise-keeping, truth-telling, etc., are the *right* actions in the relevant circumstances. The question therefore arises: Is there any such property? If so, what is it? If not, how can we account for the appearances just mentioned?

Hägerström first considers in detail and rejects, on what seem to me to be adequate grounds, various attempts to identify "rightness." To be right cannot be identified with being commanded by a certain will, e.g. the will of one's community. Again, to say that X is right cannot mean that omission to do X will be reacted against by some authority. It is always intelligible and relevant to ask whether it is *right* to obey the command, or whether the reaction against omission to do X is *right*. Now to ask whether it is right to obey a certain command obviously is not to ask whether obedience to that command is commanded. And to ask whether a social reaction against omission to do X is right is evidently not to ask whether omission to react against omission to do X is socially reacted against. Then, again, to say that X is right does not mean that X is the act which will in fact bring about the best consequences of all the acts open to the agent in the situation. There may be a sense of "right" which can be defined in this way. And this may well be one of the criteria which a person uses in trying to decide what he ought to do. But this is certainly not the sense of "right" in which one can say that it is one's duty to do that and only that act which one believes to be right. Lastly, to act rightly cannot be defined as acting in accordance with one's true self and thus maintaining one's autonomy. For suppose we ask how the various voluntary actions done by a person can be distinguished into those done by his *true* self and those done by some inferior or spurious self. The only answer that we can give is that the former are those which he does from a sense of duty because he believes them to be right and in spite of opposing motives, whilst the latter are those which he does without considering whether they are right or in spite of believing that they are wrong.

We can turn finally to Hägerström's own attempt to answer these questions. I must confess that I find it complicated and obscure. I am very doubtful whether I fully understand it, and all that I can do is to state in my own way what seem to me to be the main points.

We start from the following two premisses. (1) That which calls forth a feeling of obligation in a person to do a certain action is an experience which is described (correctly or incorrectly) as "his

believing the action to be right in the circumstances." This is the experience which we have to analyse. (2) The experience of feeling under an obligation to do an action is closely analogous to the experience which a person has when he receives from one who is in a position to command him an order to do a certain action. It is, therefore, plausible to suppose that what is described as "believing a certain action to be right in a certain situation" must be analogous to the experience of receiving an order from one whose authority one recognizes. Now Hägerström thinks that there are two factors which invest the rules of morality current in a society with an evocative power similar to that possessed by an actual word of command. These are *authority* and *custom*. We will now consider each in greater detail.

Any member of a society is from his earliest childhood constantly subject to commands from at least the following authorities, real or imaginary, viz. his parents and educators, the authorities which maintain law and order, the accepted divine powers, and the force of public opinion. These various authorities, on the whole, co-operate rather than conflict, and in the main they enforce on each member of the society actions of the same type in similar frequently recurring situations, such as being asked a question, being called upon to fulfil a promise, and so on. Long before a member of a society is grown up there is for him a whole system of types of action, e.g. violent assault, theft, lying, promise-breaking, etc., which he and all his fellows have been forbidden by various authorities to adopt in the situations in which they would be relevant. And there is for him a whole system of types of action, e.g. truth-telling, promise-keeping, respect for the property of others, etc., which he and all his fellows have been commanded to adopt in the situations in which they are relevant.

In this way the thought of any rule in this system of rules of conduct becomes invested with the same evocative power as if it were accompanied by the words "Act thus!" spoken by a recognized authority. Since many different authorities have co-operated in the past, no one in particular is now thought of as issuing the command. And, since the same type of action in similar situations is known by each of us to have been commanded not only for himself but also for all his fellows, no one in particular is now thought of as the recipient of the command. The evocative power associated with a word of command remains and is attached to the thought of acting in accordance with the rules of the system, but it is dissociated from any idea of a determinate commander or a determinate recipient.

Under such circumstances the following illusion arises, gets embodied in language, and then propagates itself through the

language in which it is embodied. We take for granted that there is a peculiar objective property, common and peculiar to acts of truth-telling, promise-keeping, and the rest of the types of conduct which the authorities have enjoined upon us. To this alleged objective property we give the name "rightness," and the word "right" functions thereafter as an ordinary adjective like "square." We assume that a person is capable of intuiting the presence of this alleged property in certain types of action. And we assume that men are so constituted that, when a person sees or thinks he sees that an action which he contemplates as possible would have this property, he inevitably has a feeling of obligation to do that action. Really there is no such objective property. What evokes the feeling of obligation to do a certain action is the knowledge that this is the kind of action which the accepted system of morality lays down for such situations, and the fact that the rules of that system have acquired through association the power of working upon us in a way analogous to that in which an order from a superior does. The so-called objective property of rightness is merely the ghostly, but none the less effective, echo of the voices of Father and Nurse, of the Policeman round the corner and "old Nobodaddy up aloft," haunting and pervading the system of moral rules in which we were brought up.

Hägerström holds that similar results follow when a custom of acting in a certain way in situations of a certain kind exists in all or most members of a society. The customary ways of acting in the relevant situations are felt as something commanded, and other ways of acting in those situations are felt as something forbidden. But no one in particular is thought of as issuing the command, and it is thought of as addressed to all and sundry and not to anyone in particular. So it is easy to delude oneself into thinking, or into talking as if one thought, that there is a peculiar objective property common and peculiar to these ways of acting in such situations; that we can recognize the presence of this property by inspection and reflexion; and that the knowledge or belief that it is present in a contemplated action calls forth a feeling of obligation to do that action. Generally authority and custom co-operate and give rise to a single system of moral rules with a commanding power derived from both sources. But they may happen to lead to different and conflicting systems of rules, each with its own commanding power. In that case the individual is subject to an insoluble internal conflict of duties.

It is time for me to bring my paper to an end. I have tried to explain Hägerström's theory, as I understand it, with the minimum of comment and criticism. But in conclusion I will say this. Hägerström's theory is a form of what is called "ethical subjectivism"

or "ethical positivism." That theory to-day has many powerful supporters in England and America. So far as I am aware, none of its Anglo-Saxon adherents has made so thorough and so ingenious an attempt as Hägerström to show how the various aspects of the admitted facts can be fitted into the theory.

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POETS AND THEIR PHILOSOPHIES

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Poets, like other men, have their speculative moods. Some poets have been widely read in the literature of philosophy and have wrestled continuously with the intellectual problems of their times. From Euripides to Mr. Eliot large expanses of dialectical argument have appeared in verse, and in our own tongue Spenser, Shakespeare, Pope, Wordsworth and many other supreme writers have questioned the semblance of nature and mind, and have sought to trace the ideal forms of reality. Men of letters in every generation have naturally discussed the problems of knowledge and existence and have offered emphatic opinions on them. The views of poets have been accorded particular honour and attention. Illustrious poets have declared that poetry opens a more penetrating road to truth than that which is provided by science or academic philosophy. Certain modern critics repeat these claims. "The mind of man," writes one, "has a knowledge of truth beyond the near-truths of science and society. Poetry tells us this truth." I will not pause here to inquire whether anything of value can be observed of poetry in general any more than can be stated of prose in general. Nor do I wish to enter into the subject of poetic truth. The questions I desire to raise concern assumptions about the philosophical ideas of poets. Recent criticism has shown a notable tendency to fasten on these ideas. The tendency revives the practice of the nineteenth century when theologians, philosophers and literary thinkers were fond of expounding the rational systems of Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. The present vogue of this prosaic treatment of poetry may be due to a strong recoil from the literary fashion prevalent a generation ago which minimized the intellectual feature in the art of poetry. The French and English disciples of Poe announced the principle that poetry has little concern with belief and the manifestoes of pure poetry rejected not only moral and metaphysical doctrine but meaning itself. Critics now display an inclination towards the opposite view. They seem often to be more occupied with the rational meaning than with the poetry.

It is indeed plain that in order to enjoy the work of a meditative and speculative poet the reader must have some understanding of the beliefs assumed by the writer. Passages and phrases in Shakespeare refer to the schemes of late medieval thought. Donne's poems express the idioms of scholasticism. Philosophical poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflect the doctrines and controversies of their generations. Nor is this scholarship enough, and

it may even obstruct the reader's perceptions. "In studying a philosopher," writes Lord Russell, "the right attitude is neither reverence nor contempt but first a kind of hypothetical sympathy, until it is possible to know what it feels like to believe in his theories." The philosophies of poets require of us a similar response. It is fatal, if we are to yield to the enchantment of Shakespeare and Milton to regard the medieval theory of order as quaint and the biblical machinery of *Paradise Lost* as ridiculous. Poetry, whether it be *Queen Mab* or *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, compels us for the moment to embrace the scheme of beliefs held by the poet. Some readers will accept certain chains of ideas in the poets more readily than others, but a wide range of intellectual adaptability is obviously demanded in order to appreciate philosophical poetry.

There are, however, writers on poetry who step beyond hypothetical sympathy. They invite us to contemplate the sequence of theories in poets, not as part of the assent that imaginative art demands, but as doctrines worthy of scientific esteem. The scattered utterances of a poet relating to man and his place in the cosmos are laboriously collected and toilsome attempts are made to compose a coherent system of thought from the pieces. Fragmentary declarations on mind or on nature are interpreted in the language of philosophy, and references to abstract principles are translated into the terms of logical discourse. The poetic quality is evaporated into rational beliefs and doctrinal assumptions. Poets are transformed into prophets and, what is worse, into philosophers.

It is not to be doubted that poets reveal to us strange and penetrating modes of experience. They add profoundly to the values of existence. They do not tell us the truth that philosophers and men of science tell us, and critics who try to force them to speak in this way only expose them to assault. Whatever definition we give to the work of philosophy we must recognize its aim to conduct its inquiries by orderly, precise and logical methods. It strives to use language to express clear thought, freed from the confusions of common speech and poetry. It seeks to derive valid conclusions from its premises, scientific inferences from the evidence. A poet may appear to be engaged in a critical examination of the argument from design or to be contending logically for a theory of real being. We cannot expect to find precision in his discussion. What we usually find is oracular, allusive and eclectic. He is using language with entirely different purposes to those of the philosopher. This observation would be trite if it were not the habit of some critics and writers of academic theses to ignore it.

The egregious treatment of poets to which I am referring flourished in the nineteenth century, but in our own day treatises have been published appraising with ardour the systems of Shelley, Words-

worth, Hardy, Yeats and Mr. Eliot. Tennyson was an important philosopher for the earlier scholars. His teaching on materialism and idealism, his demonstrations of the existence of God, his proofs of immortality and free-will were described and applauded in a score of books. Even the other day we heard a distinguished Sunday critic defend the poet's qualities as a thinker with mention of the Metaphysical Society of London and the conversations with Tyndall and Huxley. The evidence that the critic omitted was the only evidence that is relevant, the poems. I have no desire to examine the arguments presented there. Few people, I imagine, read *In Memoriam* for cogent proofs of immortality. It is, I hope, tolerably accurate to say that the ruling feature of Tennyson's doctrine is the preference of faith to reason. *The Ancient Sage* teaches that no decision is possible relating to the world in which we move, nor can we resolve whether we are only body or only mind or both, nor can we reach any decision whether we are mortal or immortal, nor even whether

> "I who speak with thee
> Am not thyself in converse with thyself,"

a truly pathological solipsism. In some moods the poet cries that nothing can be known with assurance; at other times he is convinced (by faith) that time is unreal, the physical world a shadow and a dream, all reality is mental, man is free, and that the human soul is not descended from lower forms of animal life but is endowed with a heaven-descended will. Such, together with various orthodox theological positions, are the doctrines asserted in the *Higher Pantheism* and *The Dawn*. Elsewhere in *The Two Voices* and *In Memoriam* the final conclusion is that since human beings intensely desire that certain beliefs should be true they must be true.

Tennyson's philosophy is a threadbare topic, but I have touched on it in order to throw into relief the interests and methods of the critics of his time. Books like Professor Sneath's *Philosophy of Tennyson* succeeded only in presenting the doctrines of the poet in vague and rhetorical terms. The writers deluded themselves if they imagined that these effusions could be taken seriously as philosophy, but their loose discussion was preferable to the practice of recent critics. The arguments of Tennyson could be described only in impressionist terms, for they were hardly arguments at all but impassioned assertions of beliefs and visions. Our modern critics are more ambitious. They impose a spurious precision and consistency on the affirmations of poets and in their preoccupation with the intellectual contents of poems represent passing visionary utterances in philosophic and prosaic forms. A dismal instance of this pedantry in earlier criticism is the remark of Hazlitt on the lines in *Tintern Abbey*

"A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things."

"Perhaps," writes Hazlitt, "the doctrine of what has been called philosophic necessity was never more fully expressed." Similar judgments can be found in modern writing. In a portentous work on Shelley's doctrines the lines

"Where nothing is but all things seem
And we the shadow of a dream,"

provoke comments on the poets subjective idealism. An erudite writer on Shakespeare maintains the remarkable rule that the dramatist's references to Christian theology are significant in inverse proportion to their brevity. Applying his canon the writer takes a few words of Isabella in *Measure for Measure* to assume the total Pauline theology, and surmises that behind other scanty allusions there is probably a corresponding abundance of knowledge. Brutus speaks of the state of man, like a little kingdom, suffering the nature of an insurrection. Is there not here implied the whole mass of traditional correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm? The writer next proceeds to argue as follows. If we compare Shakespeare with an author such as Montaigne we notice that the latter makes constant references to his sources. Montaigne refers, at length, for instance, to the *Natural Theology* of Raymond de Sebonde. If he had been a dramatist he would have merely hinted at these theories. Shakespeare merely hints but the knowledge must be present behind the hints. But a thread of hints is a slender foundation upon which to build an elaborate framework of theory. The framework is supplied by the critic because Shakespeare is a great poet. The less he says the more he must know. The parallel with Montaigne is a completely gratuitous argument, which begs the question. And the critic has himself, on the same page, mentioned a poet and dramatist, Jonson, who, we are told, does parade his learning; and, the point, that a dramatist does not, is destroyed.[1]

Learning, however, is not the same as a coherent philosophy. We can see what happens when a professional philosopher gets to work on the theories of poets in the late Professor Laird's *Philosophical Excursions into English Literature.* Metaphysical critics are invited to read what is there said of Pope and Shelley, of Hardy and Bridges. *The Dynasts* heaves uneasily in the wash of fatalism, determinism and predestination, "never clearly distinguishing their separate currents and components and offering in consequence a troubled perspective to every serious reader who is eager for a clue

[1] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*, p. 5.

or a philosophy." The large treatise on Shelley to which I have referred pursues with immense assiduity the task of fitting together the colliding strands of Platonism, Sir William Drummond, Dugald Stewart and Spinoza. But the task is impossible. No one could unite into consistent shape dualism and pantheism, or reach a clear view of the nature of the demogorgon. Why do the critics attempt to do so? It is the poetry of these writers that gives their ideas life; it is the poetry that supremely matters; and to abstract the theory from the poetry is to court nothing but embarrassment. It is equally one-sided to sever form from content and to divest a meditative poem like *The Excursion* of its reflections. The error is to view the scheme of thought apart from the poem. Poets have found the soil of their inspiration in abstract conceptions and philosophies as well as in particular events. Imaginative sensibility has fired at the austere logic of St. Thomas Aquinas and the mathematics of modern astrophysics. When they become absorbed into poems these philosophical notions profoundly change their character. "The poet," writes Mr. Eliot, "can employ only that part of his beliefs that he can feel." While we are reading *Prometheus Unbound* or *In Memoriam* we are not to conceive the theories as chains of thought articulated independently of their expression in the poems. Their expression in the poems transforms the ideas into a wholly different significance. The meaning lives within the poem and nowhere else. I dare not enter far into the complex elements that make a poem, including a philosophical poem. And philosophical poems differ infinitely in nature and intention. But a few relevant qualities may be mentioned.

The terms of a poet's speech do not stand for definite abstract conceptions, as the critics often seem to suppose. They are alive with dynamic suggestions. By his imaginative mode of thinking a poet can express several meanings in the same breath. He can refer to two or three planes of thought and experience at the same moment. He can fuse his senses with his thought. In a great poet the language is instinct with symbolism and the symbols are highly unstable and fluid. They cannot be translated into the speech of philosophy for they overleap the logical distinctions of prose in a concentration of dissolving perceptions and ideas. Further, a poem is an organic invention. It acquires an intense life of its own which unites its phrases and passages within the poem. This vital character should make the critical reader cautious of interpreting the abstract propositions and discussions of poets in a philosophical manner. The opening lines of Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Burnt Norton* afford a fair example of the point. The bare and prosaic statements about Time look like a passage from a treatise; but they are organically related to the mystical vision that immediately succeeds. More than that, they are in correspondence with the poem *Burnt Norton* as a whole and with

the entire *Four Quartets*. The work is nearer to music than to philosophy, and we can no more express its meaning in abstract doctrine than we can describe the premises and deductions of Beethoven, Op. 131 in C sharp minor. For of course we have to include in the poetic intention rhythm and sound, tempo, pauses and stress. All these are parts of the meaning of the poem. Critics who write as though they were decorations on the rational programme of the poem, like plums on a pudding, misconceive the meaning of poetry.

In a reflective poem theories are means of releasing the poetry. They are pivots on which the poetry turns. The poetic meaning is always more than its declared opinions and arguments. I am speaking of poems and not of brilliant dialectics in metre such as some of Browning's verse. The stature of Tennyson is not diminished by the thinness of his philosophy; he is a superb poet in many of his philosophical pieces. The rules of logic do not apply in the realm of sensibility and a poet may with impunity contradict himself. He is not concerned with scientific truth. In the course of his explorations he will discover illustrations of many metaphysical principles and provide texts for a number of philosophies. But too much inquiry into the keys to his allegories will draw us away from his art. A poem like *The Fairy Queen* or *King Lear* has many meanings; it cannot be tied to one. And often the poet cannot himself describe his meaning, for he has given it in the poem. "They come and ask me," exclaimed Goethe, "what idea I meant to embody in my *Faust*; as if I knew myself and could inform them." And he proceeds to discuss in a deeply interesting passage the relation of abstract conceptions to poetry. He concludes with the paradoxical remark that the more incomprehensible to the understanding a poetic production is so much the better is it.[1]

This is hard on the legion of philosophical commentators on *Faust*. Goethe's remarks suggest a further problem that is important in this discussion. When critics describe the philosophies of poets they are often concerned with their experiences and intuitions. Many philosophic poems, *The Prelude*, Meredith's *A Faith on Trial*, Eliot's *East Coker*, are searchings of a vision, attempts to explore it and interpret it. Some poets enjoy visions of life and the world that dominate their writing. It is inept to talk of the poetic vision in the abstract. In some poets the vision appears to them as authentic insight into the life of things. For others, or for the same poet at different times, it comes as a dream from which they awake into cold reality. Some perceive in such moments the world as it is independent of human desire; for others the vision is partly in the mind, partly in the objects seen. Some interpret the experience in theological terms, some in natural terms. To some poetic seers these tides

[1] *Conversations with Eckermann.*

of insight bring joy, to others they bring trouble and even despair. Whatever interpretation philosophic criticism may give to these moments of illumination it is important that the critic should be wary of some of the interpretations offered by the poet himself. The visionary is apt to discuss his intense experiences in the philosophical or theological language of his time. This intellectual language becomes the philosophy of the poet. And sometimes it is inadequate and even false. Wordsworth is the most interesting case. He sought to explain his profound experience in many ways, and critics have taken these explanations too seriously. When he is describing it he is an immortal guide. But now he associates it with the psychology of Hartley, now with nature-worship, now with the dogmas of evangelical theology. The result is an incoherent philosophy. And some of the beliefs he attributes to his prophetic perceptions are plainly false.

The search for intellectual meaning encourages in students of literature wrong expectations, and deters them from exercising their artistic perceptions. *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* or *Hertha* is not to be measured by the significance of its theoretical matter. I would include in my indictment the modern preoccupation with backgrounds, climates of thought and rational perspectives. Assuredly a poet's acute responses to the motions of his times furnishes the historian of ideas with striking evidence. Literature, says Whitehead, discloses the inward thoughts of an epoch. The poignant conflicts of theology and science are vividly reflected in the pages of Victorian poets, especially in the works of Tennyson. Recent writers have shown how the sense of the dissolution of the historic cosmology is portrayed in the later plays of Shakespeare. Donne and Milton, Pope, Wordsworth and Arnold have served to shed penetrating rays on the intellectual springs of their periods. Yet such inquiries bring us no more than the historical setting of the artist's work. They disclose the rational circumstances and impulses of a poet. But, once more, these are not the poetic notes. Poetry is no more the history of thought than it is thought.

Clearly, from philosophers and philosophical critics what is pressingly required is inquiry into the poetic imagination. "The imagination," remarked Goethe, "gives problems to the understanding." Those who ignore its extraordinary function in human experience, who dissolve it into philosophic ideas, are shelving the task. The splendour and vitality of a poet's philosophical vision may be aesthetically moving while it is theoretically unsatisfying. We must enter into the poetry itself to discover the fresh ranges and subtleties of experience that the poet reveals.

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THE VIRTUE OF THE ACT AND THE VIRTUE OF THE AGENT

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PARTICULAR attention has been paid in the present century (notably by Mr. E. F. Carritt, the late Professor Pritchard, and Sir David Ross) to the question as to whether a man's duty is to do what is actually right, i.e. what his situation actually demands of him, or what he thinks is right. Mr. Carritt has pointed out that the former possibility bifurcates—a man's duty may be to do what is actually demanded by his actual situation, or what is (or would be) actually demanded by what he believes to be his situation. (The latter possibility also bifurcates—a man's duty may be to do what he thinks is demanded by what he believes to be his situation, or what he would think was demanded by his actual situation, if he knew it; but only the first of these alternatives has been or needs to be seriously considered.) I do not propose in the present paper to carry this discussion any further, but rather to consider how it has been carried on in the past, as there seems to be a little confusion on this point.

In his *Ethical and Political Thinking*,[1] Mr. Carritt has suggested that "Richard Price perhaps first noticed the question in his *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*." Certainly Price did notice the question in this work, and discussed it very fully and very competently, especially in his eighth chapter, "Of the Nature and Essentials of *Virtue in Practice*, as distinguished from *absolute Virtue*; and the Principle of Action in a virtuous Agent." By "absolute" virtue, or as he also calls it "abstract" virtue, Price means "what, *in itself* and *absolutely*, it is right *such* an agent, in *such* circumstances, should do; and what, if he judged truly, he would judge he ought to do." By "virtue in practice," which he also calls "practical" virtue and "relative" virtue, he means what a man "ought to do, *upon supposition* of his having such and such sentiments," i.e. opinions as to what a situation demands of him.[2] Price's reasons for making this distinction are perhaps most succinctly stated in a footnote to an earlier chapter, where he says, "*In one sense*, a man's being *obliged* to act in a particular manner depends on his knowing it; and in *another sense*, it does not. Was not the *former true*, we might be contracting guilt, when acting with the fullest approbation of our consciences: And was not the *latter* true, it would not be sense ever to speak of *showing* another what his obligations are."[3] At least connected, and perhaps identical, with

[1] P. 14 n.

[2] Price's *Review* (Raphael's edition), p. 177.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 116, last note.

Price's distinction between "abstract" and "practical" virtue is one which he makes between "the *virtue of the action*" and "the *virtue of the agent.*" To the former he says, "no particular intention is requisite; for what is *objectively* right, may be done from any motive good or bad"; but to the latter "the particular intention is what is most essential. When this is good, there is so far virtue, whatever is true of the matter of the action."[1] In this last passage there are hints of still other ways of speaking about this subject. Thus Price describes what is "absolutely" right as what is "objectively" so—language which, as we shall see later, was adopted by Sidgwick, and which is adopted at the present time by Mr. Carritt. And the concluding sentence hints at a distinction between the "matter" and the "form" of a moral action. But this last distinction at least did not originate with Price; and as Dr. Raphael has pointed out,[2] Price himself seems to disclaim originality for his distinction between "abstract" and "practical" virtue when he mentions others who, "in a sense not entirely different from this," have divided good actions into "such as are *materially* good, and such as are *formally* so."[3]

To whom, then, was Price indebted for this distinction? Professor Passmore, reviewing Dr. Raphael's edition of Price, seems to take it to be Cudworth. "Price vaguely refers to a distinction which 'some' have made between 'material' and 'formal' goodness; in his preface, Professor Raphael wonders who this predecessor might be; the distinction (in this language) is, of course, central in Cudworth's book."[4] But while this language, or language very like it, is used in Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality* (the "book" to which Professor Passmore is referring), it is questionable whether it is quite this distinction which he is expressing by it. Cudworth's concern is not with the problem of the mistaken conscience, but with the apparent power which men have, by giving lawful commands or by making promises, to make that a duty which was not so before; and he argues that what is a duty in such a case is not the "materiality" of the act promised or commanded, i.e. the actual thing to be done, but the "formality" of obeying a command or keeping a promise, which is not "made" our duty but is so always.[5] This is not Price's problem, though it is one to which he has an important contribution to make at another point, namely in his anticipation of Sir David Ross's distinction between *prima facie* duties and duties *sans phrase*.[6]

Further, though Price's debt to Cudworth was undoubtedly considerable, there is no reason to attach particular importance to it

[1] Price's *Review* (Raphael's edition), p. 184.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xl.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[4] *Mind*, April 1949, p. 263.
[5] *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, I, ii. 5.
[6] *Op. cit.*, pp. 166–8. (See Dr. Raphael's Introduction, p. xxxix.)

at just this point, for the distinction between "material" and "formal" goodness—and that, moreover, in Price's sense rather than Cudworth's—was something of a commonplace by Price's time. (Price, it may be noted, refers to its employment by "some" rather than by any particular one.) The whole story of it is told quite clearly, and quite briefly, in the chapter in Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers*[1] which corresponds in its subject matter with the eighth chapter of Price's *Review*, being devoted to the question "Whether an action deserving moral approbation must be done with the belief of its being morally good." In answer to an argument of Hume's that we cannot without circularity suppose the virtue of an act to depend upon the agent's belief that it is virtuous, Reid suggests that "if we distinguish between that goodness which may be ascribed to an action considered by itself, and that goodness which we ascribe to a man when he puts it in execution, we shall find a key to this metaphysical lock. We admit that the goodness of an action, considered abstractly, can have no dependence upon the opinion or belief of an agent. . . . But when a man exerts his active power well or ill, there is a moral goodness or turpitude which we figuratively impute to the action, but which is truly and properly imputable to the man only; and this goodness or turpitude depends very much upon the intention of the agent, and the opinion he had of his action." He goes on to say, "This distinction has been understood in all ages by those who gave any attention to morals, though it has been variously expressed. The Greek moralists gave the name of *καθῆκον* to an action good in itself; such an action might be done by the most worthless. But an action done with a right intention, which implies real worth in the agent, they called *κατόρθωμα*. The distinction is explained by Cicero in his Offices. He calls the first *officium medium* and the second *officium perfectum*. In the scholastic ages, an action good in itself was said to be *materially* good, and an action done with a right intention was called *formally* good. This last way of expressing the distinction is still familiar among theologians; but Mr. Hume seems not to have attended to it."

The "Greek moralists" to whom Reid, following Cicero, here refers, are the Stoics, and both Reid and Price introduce their distinction in chapters in which they are developing the characteristic Stoical "topic" of the moral worthlessness of actions which are not done from a sense of duty. The theologians mentioned in Reid's last sentence as retaining the medieval terminology, included Protestants as well as Roman Catholics. The distinction between formal and material rightness, in those terms, appears, for example, in a catechism drawn up in the middle of the seventeenth century by the Scottish Covenanting divine, Samuel Rutherford. This work contains

[1] V, iv.

a number of questions and answers on the subject of the conscience, among which is the question, "Quhat of the erring conscience?" and the answer "It bindeth so that he sinneth quho doth any thing against a conscience howbeit erring, because conscience is Godis depute, and he that striketh a private man, believing him to be the king, is esteemed a striker of the king, and therefor he that doeth against an erring conscience sinneth *formaliter et interpretative quamvis non materialiter*, for the thing he doeth is good but he sinnis *in modo*."[1] (Rutherford's illustration is a variant of one used by Aquinas in making the same point. Aquinas is replying to a real or imaginary objector who argues, "According to Augustine, the command of a lower authority does not bind if it be contrary to the command of a higher authority: e.g. if a provincial governor command something that is forbidden by the emperor. But erring reason sometimes proposes what is against the command of a higher power, namely, God, whose power is supreme. Therefore the decision of an erring reason does not bind." Aquinas's answer is that "the saying of Augustine holds good when it is known that the inferior authority prescribes something contrary to the command of the higher authority. But if a man were to believe the command of the pro-consul to be the command of the emperor, in scorning the command of the pro-consul he would be scorning the command of the emperor." And similarly "when erring reason proposes something as being commanded by God, then, to scorn the dictate of reason is to scorn the commandment of God."[2])

This distinction was in fact bound to be made, however it might be worded, by any candid commentator on Romans xiv. 14, "To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."[3] The commentary most familiar to an eighteenth-century English Nonconformist such as Price would probably have been Matthew Henry's *Exposition of all the Books of the Old and New Testaments* (1714), which says on this text, "He who does a thing which he verily believes to be unlawful, however the thing be in itself, to him it is a sin. This arises from that unchangeable law of our creation, which is, that our wills, in all their choices, motions and directions, should follow the dictates of our understandings. This is the order of nature; which order is broken if the understanding (though misguided) tells us that such a thing is a sin, and yet we will do it. This is a *will* to do evil; for if it appears to us to be sin, there is the same pravity and corruption of the will in the doing of it, as if really it were a sin;

[1] *Catechisms of the Second Reformation*, edited by A. F. Mitchell, pp. 165–6.

[2] *Summa Theologica*, I–II, Q. 19, Art. 5.

[3] Aquinas (*op. cit.*) uses the concluding verse of this chapter as a proof-text. "For it is written (Rom. xiv. 23): *All that is not of faith*—i.e. all that is against conscience—*is sin*."

and therefore we ought not to do it. Not that it is in the power of any man's conscience to alter the nature of the action in itself, but only as to himself." With a certain Calvinistic harshness Henry adds, "It must be understood likewise with this proviso, though men's judgments and opinions may make that which is good in itself to become evil to them, yet they cannot make that which is evil in itself, to become good, either in itself or to them." There is no trace of this inconsequent "proviso" in Price (who adopts the more liberal view of Aquinas[1] that an erring conscience not only "binds" but "excuses," except of course where the error is due to negligence); but Price's language is at some points very like Henry's—note, for example, Henry's use of the word "understanding," which is the word that Price favoured, for the faculty of moral discernment; and the distinction between what an act is "in itself" and what it is "to us," which is Price's "absolute" and "relative" in Saxon.

Of the recognized moralists, I suspect that those by whom Price was most strongly influenced at this point were Butler and Balguy. The medieval distinction appears in the former's *Analogy*, where he notes in passing that "actions materially virtuous, which have no sort of difficulty, but are perfectly agreeable to our particular inclinations, may possibly be done only from these particular inclinations, and so may not be any exercise of the principle of virtue, i.e. not be virtuous action at all."[2] And Price's choice of the terms "abstract" and "practical" may be an echo of that well-known passage in Butler's Preface to his *Sermons*[3] in which he contrasts the type of moral philosophy which "begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things" with that which starts "from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is." Butler himself says that both these approaches are legitimate; and it does not seem fanciful to regard Price in his Chapter VIII as implicitly suggesting how the field of ethical speculation may best be divided between them. "Abstract or absolute" virtue is determined by "the abstract relations of things," and it is when we pass on to consider "virtue in practice" that such topics as the supremacy of conscience in "the particular nature of man" come up for discussion.

In John Balguy's *Foundation of Moral Goodness*,[4] our distinction is referred to as one between the "rectitude" of an action and the "justification" of the agent. "By the Reasonableness of an action," Balguy says, "may either be meant its Conformity to the true Reasons and Relations of Things; or to the Understanding of the Agent. The Compliance of the Will with a mis-informed Under-

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I–II, Q. 19, Art. 6.
[2] Part I, Ch. V, par. 16.
[3] Paragraph 12.
[4] Second Part, Answer to the objector's Article XXIX. (Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists*, § 735.)

standing, justifies the Agent, in respect of that Action. The Compliance of the Will with a well-informed Understanding, not only justifies the Agent, but is really in itself a right Action. An involuntary Error is certainly blameless. But though it can never be reputed a Crime, it may be, and often is, an Incapacity. It may disable the Agent so far as to obstruct the Rectitude and Perfection of his Actions. What is it that acquits and justifies an erroneous Agent? The Reasonableness of his Actions. For though they are not conformable to the true Reasons of Things, yet they are conformable to his own Reason and Judgment. . . . Though the real Relations of Things are the true Rule of a moral Agent, yet when that Rule is out of his Reach, Reason allows and directs him to be governed by apparent ones." Balguy's "Rectitude and Perfection" suggests the Ciceronian *officium perfectum*, though he speaks of the "perfection" given to a well-intentioned act by its also being objectively right, rather than of objectively right acts as being "perfected" by a good intention. There is an explicit reference to Balguy in Price's chapter on "abstract" and "practical" virtue; not, indeed, directly in connection with that distinction, but in connection with the closely allied topic of the moral superiority of acts done from a rational conviction as to their rightness, to acts of the same external sort springing merely from a "blind impulse." (Price's terminology at this point, where he contrasts "rational" with "instinctive" benevolence, is taken over directly from Balguy.[1])

It should now be sufficiently plain that Price was at this point no innovator, but was just what he claimed to be, a "reviewer" of questions raised, and in principle even answered, by his predecessors; and also that his debt here is to the Stoic side of his ancestry, mediated through Butler, rather than to the Platonic side, mediated through Cudworth. (Price's likeness to Kant has been often noted[2]; it tends to be forgotten that both had their Greek and Roman precursors, with whose positions, especially as they were to be found in Cicero, the eighteenth-century moralists were all familiar.) But, at this point as at many others, there is a lucidity and thoroughness in Price's discussion that is to be found in none of his predecessors, and in none of his contemporaries but Reid; and it is not surprising that Dugald Stewart, in the section of his *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers*[3] which deals with the ambiguous application of "the epithets Right and Wrong, Virtuous and Vicious" to "external actions" and to "the intentions of the agent," should refer to Price's Chapter VIII and Reid's Essay V, Chapter IV, as the *loci classici* on the subject. Stewart, it may be noted, speaks of Price's terminology as if it were

[1] Compare Price, p. 191, with Balguy, in Selby-Bigge, § 555.

[2] See e.g. Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. I, p. 80 n.

[3] IV, v. 3.

by his time the standard one, though he adds in a footnote that "a distinction similar to that now made between absolute and relative rectitude was expressed among the schoolmen by the phrases *material* and *formal virtue*."

Stewart takes up toward Price and Reid the position of an admiring disciple, but in his successor at Edinburgh, Thomas Brown, we find a change of attitude. According to Brown, "to say that any action which we are considering is right or wrong, and to say that the person who performed it has merit or demerit, are to say precisely the same thing"[1]; and again, "The virtue of an action is the virtue of the agent—his merit, his conformity to duty or obligation."[2] He defends this position on the ground that "an action, though we often speak of it abstractly, is not, and cannot be, any thing which exists independently of the agent," and appears to subsume the case in which the same action is done by one agent who thinks it wrong and by another who thinks it right, under the case in which the same action is performed by different agents in different circumstances, and so is not strictly speaking "the same" action. "The same action, in its only true sense of sameness—that is to say, the same frame of mind in circumstances precisely similar—cannot . . . be relatively right and absolutely wrong. . . . If it be relatively right, it is absolutely right; and what we call the absolute action that is wrong is a different action." It is not at all clear how Brown, in thus refusing to admit a rightness in actions which is independent of the goodness of the motives from which they are done, is able to avoid the circularity which Hume saw in a good motive's consisting in a desire or intention to do what is right because it is right.

In this criticism of Price and Reid and Stewart, Brown was something of a precursor of T. H. Green (and, to come nearer home, of H. W. B. Joseph). Conversely, the nineteenth-century school which was most careful to preserve the distinction which Brown rejected was that of Utilitarianism. This is not entirely surprising; for at least one, and that not the least eminent, of the eighteenth-century Utilitarians was quite at home with the distinction between "abstract" and "relative" virtue, and was careful to indicate that the characteristic doctrine of his school had to do primarily with the former rather than the latter. I refer to Paley, who when laying it down that "actions are to be estimated by their tendency," adds that this is said only of "actions in the abstract." "Actions in the abstract are right or wrong, according to their *tendency*; the agent is virtuous or vicious according to his *design*. . . . It is evident that our concern is with actions in the abstract."[3] It is in a similar spirit that John Stuart Mill,[4] replying to the charge that Utilitarianism "renders

[1] Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, LXXIII.
[2] *Ibid.*, LXXIV. [3] *Moral and Political Philosophy*, II, vi, footnote.
[4] *Utilitarianism*, Ch. II.

men cold and unsympathizing" by making them "regard only the dry and hard consideration of the consequences of their actions, not taking into their moral estimate the qualities from which those actions emanate," says that "if the assertion means that they do not allow their judgment respecting the rightness or wrongness of an action to be influenced by their opinion of the qualities of the person who does it, this is a complaint not against utilitarianism, but against having any standard of morality at all; for certainly no known ethical standard decides an action to be good or bad because it is done by a good or bad man." He seems here to have forgotten or neglected Thomas Brown.[1] He goes on: "Utilitarians are quite aware . . . that a right action does not necessarily indicate a virtuous character, and that actions which are blameable, often proceed from qualities entitled to praise." But by far the most careful and penetrating nineteenth-century discussion of our distinction is that in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics.*

Sidgwick, like Price, distinguishes among right actions those which are "absolutely" so; but his use of this adverb is different from Price's. For what Price usually calls "absolute" rightness, Sidgwick prefers Price's other term "objective." He mentions the older antithesis of "formal" and "material," though he remarks: "I do not myself usually employ the antithesis of Form and Matter in philosophical exposition, as it appears to me open to the charge of obscurity and ambiguity."[2] It is plain from a footnote in the first edition of his work that the writer who was mainly responsible for his feeling like this was Kant.[3] In the first edition, though not in the final one, he indicates the Stoic origin of the distinction, observing that "in the Stoic system, and in the teaching of later schools which have much affinity with Stoicism, it has been held that an action could not be strictly speaking right, unless done" from the "impulse to do what is right, simply because it is right"; and adding in a footnote, "In Stoic phraseology an action not done from this motive, however completely it possessed all external characteristics of rightness, was called merely καθῆκον (officium) instead of κατόρθωμα (recte factum)."[4] In both earlier and later editions Sidgwick makes it clear that the "subjective" rightness which he opposes directly to "objective" does not include quite all that is traditionally meant by "formal" rightness. "The term 'formal rightness,' . . . implying a *desire* or choice of the act as right, implies also a *belief* that it is so. But the latter condition may exist without the former: I cannot perform an act from pure love of duty without believing it to be right:

[1] Though his *System of Logic* (II, iii, 6) contains an admirable criticism of one of Brown's follies in a different field, besides being positively indebted to him in its theory of causation. [2] *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th edition, p. 206 n.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1st edition, p. 181 n. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 180 n. 2.

but I can believe it to be right and yet do it from some other motive." By a "subjectively" right act, Sidgwick means one done in the belief that it is right, whatever be its motive. And it would, he thinks, "be universally held"—even where the Stoic rigorism as to motivation was rejected—"that no act can be absolutely right, whatever its external aspect and relations, which is believed by the agent to be wrong." (For "absolutely right," in this sense,[1] he also sometimes says "completely right.") But, he goes on, "it may still be asked whether it is better in any particular case that a man should do what he mistakenly believes to be his duty, or what really is his duty in the particular circumstances—considered apart from his mistaken belief—and would be completely right if he could only think so." And in his discussion of this question,[2] Sidgwick manages to do justice not only to the point of view which Utilitarians share with such writers as Price and Reid, but also to the opposed view of Brown, and even to the Calvinistic "proviso" which we encountered in Matthew Henry (though he does not mention these particular people, or any others, specifically).

What shocked Brown about the distinction between the "virtue of the act" and the "virtue of the agent" was that it seemed to put us in the position of wondering "whether we should not have merit in doing what is wrong, or demerit in doing what is right for us to do."[3] The mental picture which Brown here raises is of a man wondering whether to do what is really right, or to do what is not right but what he believes to be so, and thus act praiseworthily. But one of the first things which Sidgwick points out is that the recognition of a possible difference between what is really right and what we believe to be so, does not mean that it is possible for a man to distinguish between the two in the moment of decision. "The necessity for a practical choice between 'subjective' and 'objective' rightness" cannot arise at this point, but "can only present itself in respect of the conduct of another person whom it is in our power to influence." This "only" perhaps carries the point a little far; for the distinction between the "subjective" and the "objective" rightness of our own actions does sometimes set us the problem of deciding whether (*a*) to proceed immediately with something which we believe it is our duty to do at approximately that time, or (*b*) to spend a little more time in considering whether the action we are contemplating really is our duty after all. (This problem is briefly touched upon by Reid, who includes certain "general rules of deliberation"—that "we ought not to deliberate in cases that are perfectly clear," that "when the case is not

[1] Which seems to be the sense of Aquinas, when he says that "for a thing to be evil, one single defect suffices, whereas for it to be good absolutely, it is not sufficient for it to be good in one point only, it must be good in every respect" (*Summa Theologica*, I–II, Q. 20, Art. 2).

[2] 7th edition, III, i. 3 (pp. 207–8). [3] Lecture LXXIII.

clear, when it is of importance, and when there is time for deliberation, we ought to deliberate with more or less care," that "our deliberation should be brought to an issue in due time," and so on—among the "axioms in morals."[1] It has also been discussed recently by Mr. Carritt.[2]) Nevertheless, it is plainly impossible that at any given moment of time we should think of a decision with which we are confronted as one between what we believe we ought to do and what we really ought to do (though our decision may without contradiction appear in this light to an outsider); and as an implicit protest against any such notion, Brown's position has its measure of justification.

The genuine problem which the distinction between the "subjective" and the "objective" rightness of an act sometimes sets the "outsider" is stated by Sidgwick as follows: "If another is about to do what we think wrong while he thinks it right, and we cannot alter his belief but can bring other motives to bear on him that may overbalance his sense of duty, it becomes necessary to decide whether we ought thus to tempt him to realize what we believe to be objectively right against his own convictions. I think," he goes on, "that the moral sense of mankind would pronounce against such temptation—thus regarding the Subjective rightness of an action as more important than the Objective—unless the evil of the act prompted by a mistaken sense of duty appeared to be very grave." He gives in a footnote the sort of exceptional case he has in mind. "We should generally approve a statesman who crushed a dangerous rebellion by working on the fear or cupidity of a leading rebel who was acting on conscientious grounds." Sidgwick's reading of "the moral sense of mankind" is interestingly borne out by the decision of a modern non-Utilitarian writer about a not dissimilar case. "If in March 1944 the European war could have been ended by the selfish treachery of a convinced Nazi, I should have thought this on the whole better than its continuance by his conscientious refusal to save his skin."[3] And we could put a favourable interpretation on Matthew Henry's remark that "though men's judgments and opinions may make that which is good in itself to become evil to them, yet they cannot make that which is evil in itself to become good, either in itself or to them," by treating it as a contribution to this "outsider's" problem, i.e. by reading it as an assertion that while the outsider must encourage a man to follow his conscience when it leads him to refrain from what is good in the belief that it is evil, he cannot always do so when it leads the man to do what is evil in the belief that it is good.

[1] *Essays on the Active Powers*, II, iii.
[2] *Ethical and Political Thinking*, p. 21.
[3] E. F. Carritt, *Ethical and Political Thinking*, p. 83.

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PLATO AS POET: A CRITICAL INTERPRETATION

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PART II

In my previous paper I endeavoured to illustrate the different ways in which Plato used poetry for philosophical purposes, and it now remains to attempt a final appraisal of the success or failure of Plato considered specifically as a poetic philosopher. But before I embark on what will prove a somewhat complicated task it is necessary for me to refer briefly to certain theories concerning Plato's use of myth, since they vitally affect (though in different ways) the philosophical significance of his poetic method—and it is this philosophical significance which is our principal problem in any final evaluation.

Philosophical Value of the Platonic Myth

Of the many theories which, from ancient to modern times, have been propounded concerning the correct interpretation of the Platonic Myths, that of Professor J. A. Stewart is perhaps the most relevant to our own enquiry. Its detailed application to each of the "genuine" Myths (or what he classifies as such) occupies him throughout a massive work of over 500 pages,[1] and I can only give here the briefest summary of his main tenets. They are as follows:[2]

1. There is a certain mental experience called "Transcendental Feeling."
2. Transcendental Feeling may be defined as "a sense of That which was, and is, and ever shall be"—a sense of Timeless Being. As a normal experience of our conscious life, it is a conviction that "Life is good."
3. All great poetry (and particularly the poetry of Dante, Wordsworth and Shelley) arouses Transcendental Feeling in the mind of the reader. Not only that, but the chief end of poetry is precisely to induce Transcendental Feeling, and if it does not do so "there is no *Poetry*· only, at best, readable verse."
4. The Platonic Myths are equivalent to poetry.
5. Hence, the Platonic Myths serve first to *induce*, then to *satisfy* and *regulate* Transcendental Feeling—but for the benefit of conduct and science. They achieve this by (I) Imaginative Representation of Ideas of Reason (Soul, Cosmos, God), and (II) Imaginative Deduction of Categories of the Understanding and Moral Virtues.

If we enquire more closely how all this fits into the philosophical picture, and how "conduct and science" are served by Transcendental Feeling, this is what Stewart replies:[3]

[1] *The Myths of Plato*, London 1905.
[2] *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. 20 *sqq.*
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–3.

> In the wide-awake life of conduct and science, Understanding, left to itself, claims to be the measure of truth; Sense, to be the criterion of good and bad. Transcendental Feeling, welling up from another "Part of the Soul," whispers to Understanding and Sense that they are leaving out something. What? Nothing less than the secret plan of the universe. And what is that secret plan? The other "Part of the Soul" indeed comprehends it in silence as it is, but can explain it to the Understanding only in the symbolical language of the interpreter, Imagination—in Vision. In the Platonic Myth we assist at a Vision in which the wide-awake life of our ordinary experiences and doings is seen as an act in a vast drama of the creation and consummation of all things.

It would not be unreasonable to dismiss this hypothesis out of hand as mere fanciful speculation, and it would certainly be a waste of time to criticize it in any detail. But since it would, if true, compel a serious modification of the views I am here putting forward in connection with the Platonic Myths, a few short comments seem warranted.

Now, quite apart from the crudeness of trying to turn Plato into a Kantian, and the extraordinary theory of poetry involved, there is no ground for assuming that Plato—however much he taught a supersensible reality in the world of pure Being—was either aware of the experience described by Stewart as Transcendental Feeling, or that, if aware of it, he specifically used his Myths to induce, satisfy and regulate it through the imaginative setting forth of "the *a priori* conditions of conduct and knowledge." Professor Stewart, however, having elaborated his hypothesis, works it to death and treats each so-called Myth like a conjurer's hat which has every time to produce one or more of his philosophical rabbits (Ideas of Reason, Categories and Virtues), and often, as in the *Protagoras* Myth, a good deal else besides.

The more one studies the original Myths, however, the more is one convinced that Stewart's explanations are too ingenious by far, and that no single Myth will support the complicated Kantian superstructure that is forcibly imposed upon it. Moreover, can it be seriously claimed that either the Atlantis Myth in the *Timaeus*, or the fable of Prometheus in the *Protagoras*—let alone the grotesque if humorous story propounded by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*—is really capable of arousing "a solemn sense of Timeless Being"? In short, although it seems clear that all the Myths have, like many of the other figures and allegories which have not been raised to the dignity of "genuine" Myths, some philosophic purpose (high or humble) to fulfil, it is hardly possible to interpret them in the way suggested by Stewart. But if Stewart's explanation *could* be accepted—and to do so would involve in addition the ignoring of some palpable inconsistencies in his Myth-classification[1]—then we should have, not only a

[1] These particular inconsistencies can be summed up by saying that Stewart cannot *both* claim to find Plato the poet divorced from Plato the dialectician *and* include as mythical passages where the dialectician is very obviously at work.

coherent interpretation of the Myths, but a complete justification[1] of them too from the philosophic point of view, and hence a complete justification of the particular combination of philosophy and poetry which they allegedly represent.

Quite apart, however, from the criticism to which we have already had to subject Stewart's theory, it must also be pointed out that what we may with tolerable accuracy call poetry in Plato is not confined to Stewart's "genuine" Myths; while conversely not all the Myths are uniformly poetic, and some, as we have seen, are hardly poetic at all. Thus even if it were true to say that Plato is "at his highest in his Myths," it would still not be true to say that philosophy and poetry are *always* there blended together.

Let us now glance at the theory of Julius Stenzel. For here, within the framework of a hypothesis concerning the correct interpretation of the Dialogues in general, we can find a more plausible account of the philosophic value of the Platonic Myths—or of some of them at least. Now Stenzel has endeavoured to show that the teaching of Plato, as opposed to that of Socrates, can be discerned by a study of the special devices by which Plato is able, without prejudice to the artistic coherence of his portrait of Socrates, to insinuate parts of his own doctrines.[2] Thus (to condense a somewhat intricate hypothesis), in the early Dialogues, when Socrates is still the chief speaker, Plato conveys his own theories by allowing Socrates at times to speak figuratively and poetically (e.g. in the *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Symposium*), and in some of the later Dialogues Socrates is deliberately deposed to enable Plato himself to speak dogmatically through the mouth of the Eleatic Stranger or anonymous Athenian. As it is the first of these devices which concerns us here, I shall quote two brief passages in which Stenzel describes its *modus operandi*.[3]

> When, in spite of everything, the method of Socrates is amplified by the introduction of new and strange doctrines, we see these doctrines in the sceptical perspective of Socrates as the chief speaker; otherwise his true character could not have been retained. Plato at first certainly did not feel that this cramped his artistic purpose. On the contrary some special device was necessary in order that the mystical doctrines might be revealed by Socrates (he had, as it were, to divine from afar their deep connexion with the knowledge which he also had desired); and this gave Plato a welcome

[1] Provided of course we can believe with Stewart something like this: "Philosophy is not what finally satisfies—or surfeits—the intellect: it is the organic play of all the human powers and functions—it is Human Life . . . eager and hopeful, and successful in proportion to its hope—*its hope being naturally visualized in dreams of a future state*. These dreams the human race will never outgrow,—so the Platonist holds,—will never ultimately cast aside as *untrue*; (hence) the Philosophy of an epoch must be largely judged by the way in which it 'represents' them" (*op. cit.*, p. 70, first italics mine).

[2] *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, pp. viii, 3 and *passim*.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 13.

> opportunity to narrate a myth at full length in poetical style. He would take over all the parts of the traditional story, and there may well have been additions due to his own artistic invention; for all such details he naturally did not wish to claim scientific validity. Now this method made it possible for him to represent at any stage the process of the impenetration of myth by metaphysics and logic—a process without end because the coincidence is never complete.

The reference here, I take it, is in the main to the eschatological Myths of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*, and also to Socrates' appeal to priests and seers at *Meno* 81A in connection with the doctrines of Immortality and Reminiscence. Plato's deeper purpose in employment of these poetic devices is described by Stenzel as follows:

> It will be found to be an essential *motif* in his philosophy that he calls in the assistance of religious faith in order to complete the Socratic ideal of an absolute knowledge; he gives to mere mythology the dignity of a religious metaphysic, and proves that it is the foundation of that synopsis of the whole of knowledge for which he strives; or rather that it is the foundation of all knowledge whatsoever.

We need not discuss here the highly controversial implications of this latter passage; it is sufficient to note that some of the Myths at least are held to acquaint us with the "real teaching" of Plato, but without doing violence to the artistry of the Dialogue in which they occur. And thus poetry or poetic method becomes *one* of the devices which Plato uses in order to convey his own teaching and show where it either differs from, or goes beyond, that of Socrates.[1] There may be some truth in this claim—for we must allow, I think, that even in the earlier Dialogues Plato was concerned, somehow or other, to insinuate some of his own views; but the hypothesis in question does not cover, and is not intended to cover, the full range of poetry in the Dialogues, nor does it pretend to furnish a full and coherent explanation of all the Myths. Moreover, it does not explain why some doctrines (e.g. Immortality and Reminiscence), which are propounded by the special device of poetic myth, are also expounded dialectically and by Socrates himself. Surely this would tend to abolish the distinction between "Socrates" and "Plato" which the poetic device was to ensure? Nor again does it take sufficient account of the clear indication

[1] At times Stenzel's hypothesis introduces considerable complications from the specific point of view of our own enquiry. Thus the discourse of Diotima—which for Stewart is (subsequent to the Birth of Eros allegory) a true Myth setting forth in impassioned language the "Transcendental Idea of the Soul"—is for Stenzel an artistic device which allows Plato to indicate his own doctrine concerning the substantial Being of the Ideas (*op. cit.*, pp. 4–5). But—and this is vital for us here—although it is equally poetic before and after 209E, it is only at this point (where Diotima tells Socrates she is now going to discuss matters "beyond" his grasp) that Plato is held to enter the scene and that the genuinely *Platonic* Ideal theory is propounded. Thus it is the *device* rather than the *poetry* which counts.

given in the Dialogues that most mythical exposition deals with the probable, and not with the strictly demonstrable. But we need not press these criticisms here, for Stenzel is really concerned with the Myths only incidentally, his main preoccupation lying elsewhere.

M. Frutiger, however, is exclusively concerned with explaining the Myths, in all their subtle complexity, and a few words about his thesis may serve to round off this section. Avoiding the Kantianism of Stewart, and likewise the latter's fetish about Transcendental Feeling, Frutiger makes a gallant effort to establish criteria which will enable him to group all the Myths (comprising a much more extensive list than Stewart's) into three main categories: the allegorical, the genetico-symbolic and the para-scientific.[1] These three headings roughly describe the respective purposes of the Myths which fall under them. It is not possible to enter here into any detailed discussion of Frutiger's hypothesis; on the whole it represents the most plausible attempt yet made to give the Myths a coherent interpretation without imposing too severe a strain on our credulity. Sometimes, it is true, Frutiger seems to go against what are apparently the express declarations of Plato himself—as when he interprets the Timaean cosmogony as a genetico-symbolic Myth,[2] and not as a *probable* account of what actually happened (i.e. as a para-scientific Myth). But even this appears to find a precedent in the reported comments of the early Academicians, Xenocrates and Crantor.

Some of Frutiger's claims regarding the *value* of the Myths, however, are open to question, and I shall have to refer to these in the concluding section. I shall restrict myself here, therefore, to quoting two remarks which seem to me important but less controversial. The first defines the "three essential characteristics" of all the Platonic Myths. These are: "Symbolisme, liberté de l'exposé, imprécision prudente de la pensée volontairement maintenue en deçà de la franche affirmation."[3] The second describes the particular effect the Myths have on us:[4]

> Etonnamment substantiels, (les) mythes parlent à l'intelligence presque autant qu'à l'imagination ou au sentiment, et nous forcent à méditer par les multiples résonances qu'ils éveillent dans notre esprit.

Let us now extricate ourselves, so far as we can, from the technicalities with which we have perforce been concerned, and make some attempt to sum up the situation from the specific point of view of this study.

[1] *Les Mythes de Platon*, Paris 1930, pp. 180 *sqq*.

[2] The function of the genetico-symbolic Myth is held to be as follows. It enables Plato to unroll a given object's imaginary history, which exhibits one after the other, and each in its due place in the hierarchy of concepts, the multiple characters whose *simultaneous* presence constitutes its proper nature.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

Conclusions

It is no exaggeration to say that, throughout the whole range of poetic philosophers, the exact position of Plato is the most difficult to assess. And it has therefore been necessary to go to some length to make clear the various complications which are responsible for this.

Obviously enough—although this is not always sufficiently appreciated—there is a great abyss between Plato's method of writing philosophy and Aristotle's; and it need scarcely be emphasized that our view to-day as to what constitutes the correct form of philosophical exposition, can be described as, in the main, Peripatetic. What we really like are *treatises*, dealing with one problem or a series of interrelated problems, set forth with systematic thoroughness, expressing quite clearly the author's own views and coming, in due course, to some definite conclusion.

But Plato has not supplied us with treatises—not even in his later Dialogues; nor, we may venture to assert, could he have done so. Neither his sense of artistry, nor his beliefs concerning the way philosophy should be taught, would have permitted this. We have therefore to take Plato on his own terms—as we have to take all great writers—and do the best we can to understand him. We have to accept the fact that a philosopher who was also a consummate literary artist, and furthermore a poet by instinct, would want (or perhaps be automatically compelled) to express himself with a certain richness and variety; and that he would therefore deploy his talents in a number of different ways to enforce what he thought worthy of belief—to communicate his vision of truth so that the reader could share it by becoming, as it were, a kindred soul. It need not surprise us, therefore, that there were many occasions when he considered it suitable, and perhaps imperative, to use the incantational persuasiveness of poetic language.

But sometimes we have to pay a heavy enough price for this richness and variety of technique; for it bedevils our attempts to understand what he was properly concerned to convey. But here we have to be careful, and avoid jumping to unwarranted conclusions. It is not always due to the fact that Plato is for the moment becoming recognizably *poetic* that such interpretative difficulties arise—indeed, their main cause resides, as emphasized at the outset, in the fundamental character of his method of philosophical exposition. Moreover, although, as I shall hasten to admit in a moment, Plato's "poeticalness" is not by any means above criticism from a philosophic point of view, there are certain factors which have to be taken into account, and which, if neglected, render any attempt at evaluation from the standpoint that interests us here, palpably misleading or even absurd.

One of these factors is, as I have already stressed, the frequent difficulty we have in deciding exactly when his language is "prosaic"

and when "poetic;" sometimes the distinction is fairly obvious, at other times it is a matter for nice discrimination.

Another factor is the differing nature of the philosophical import or significance of the more poetic passages themselves. Thus when these serve merely (or mainly) as "illustrations"—as in the allegory of the Cave or the fable of the Grasshoppers—they offer little difficulty for interpretation and therefore create no problem. On the contrary, they are, to a greater or lesser extent, philosophically valuable in that they help us, quickly and vividly, to grasp the point at issue—as do so many of the other illustrative figures (such as Gyges' Ring or the Disorderly Crew) which are not nearly so poetic. On the other hand, there are certain poetic passages which *do* create special problems, and their philosophical value is, as we have seen, a matter of no little controversy.

The question at issue, then, reduces to this. Is Plato to be praised or blamed for the passages (mythical or non-mythical) which go beyond mere illustration and exhibit him as philosophizing by poetic method?

I think we may answer this question more easily if we first state what would make make such a method definitely undesirable. It would be undesirable:

1. If it directly and inevitably led to confusion in interpretation.
2. If it hindered rather than assisted rational speculation.
3. If it was deliberately used to buttress a weak argument by an appeal to our emotions, or to make us accept as *true* some doctrine in reality put forward on account of its alleged moral or religious utility.

As regards the first point, we must frankly admit that the Platonic Myths are frequent offenders.[1] M. Frutiger excuses this as follows:[2]

> Que la forme dont se revêt sa pensée puisse paraître insolite à des modernes, que l'abondance des symboles soit, pour les critiques, une source de perplexités sans fin, nous n'en disconvenons pas; mais qui serait assez barbare pour en vouloir à Platon d'être poète autant que philosophe?

Certainly we must not harbour a grudge against Plato for being a poet; but at the same time we have to bear in mind that he was a declared philosopher—and philosophers surely should do everything to avoid any part of their works becoming "une source de perplexités sans fin"! Whatever purpose the Myths were meant to serve—and most (though not all) critics are in agreement that they have *some* philosophic function—there has been unending diversity of interpretation since the split on this point between Xenocrates and Crantor of

[1] Although here too we have to discriminate. For myth, as we have seen, cuts across poetry: not all the so-called Myths are uniformly poetic, and some are hardly poetic at all. But we may perhaps say that they all, to a greater or lesser extent, represent a poetic method of philosophizing.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

the Academy on the one hand, and Aristotle and the Peripatetics on the other. Nor, as the previous section should have made clear, has controversy by any means come to an end. This confusion in interpretation, therefore, cannot be wholly ascribed to the obtuseness of critics (although Aristotle should have known better than to take his master's words so literally); and the blame for it must lie squarely on Plato's own shoulders. But this stricture must be taken to apply only in the case of the Myths (or some of the Myths); there were other occasions when Plato philosophized by poetic method without causing confusion for his interpreters—although questions could be raised from other points of view. But I shall return to this in a moment.

Coming now to the second point—namely, whether Plato's use of poetic method assists or hinders rational speculation—we may say right away (with reference to the Myths) that a "fiction" need not necessarily be rationally objectionable; indeed, what we might call "controlled fictions" are often of inestimable value in the austere realms of science and mathematical physics to-day. But are Plato's fictions always sufficiently controlled? M. Frutiger, whom we may quote once more, appears to think they are:[1]

> La fiction, chez (Platon), n'est qu'un moyen, jamais un but; loin d'obnubiler la raison, elle lui aide à mieux saisir les essences, toute au rôle modeste, mais utile, qui lui est assigné: celui d'une *ancilla philosophiae*.

It is perhaps natural that a critic who has worked out an interpretation of the Myths with such consistency and skill should make a statement like this. And it is true that it holds good in some cases—but not, I would suggest, by any means in all. Many of the Myths definitely *do* "becloud the reason" because, to put it baldly, we cannot see clearly what Plato is driving at, or how far we should give rational assent to the implications of the fiction.[2] Moreover, some of the Myths are internally inconsistent (the Timaean cosmogony is perhaps the most flagrant example), while others (e.g. the *Phaedrus* Myth) propound doctrines inconsistent with parallel doctrines, non-mythically presented, in other Dialogues. Nor, it may be added, are all the Myths doctrinally consistent with each other. Plato's fictions, therefore, even when internally consistent, are sometimes a very dubious *ancilla philosophiae*—especially if we are anxious to obtain a coherent picture of his philosophy as a whole.

But granting all this, there are still certain mitigating circumstances to be taken into account. The reason, for instance, for the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

[2] In the Atlantis Myth for instance, we are not certain whether, as Taylor holds, Plato is merely concerned to enforce a simple moral, or whether, as Frutiger claims, his object is to "fournir une apparence de réalité au plan de l'état idéal." Perhaps he had both ends in view.

constant ingression of myth into the Dialogues is not only to be sought in the desire to adopt, on occasion, some special device to further this or that objective. It is also to be sought in the fact that Plato still had one foot in the semi-mythological world of the Pre-Socratics—a world in which rationalism alternately clashed and intermingled with irrationalism, and poetry was the natural medium of expression. Plato is not the pure intellectualist that histories of philosophy are so fond of presenting to us; on the contrary, he makes it clear that, for him at least, speculation must often outrun reason.[1] And the Myths which arise, as it were, from this lack of rational certainty are characterized, not only by that "prudent imprecision" to which M. Frutiger has drawn attention (and which Plato himself declares to be at times necessary), but also by the rich but cloudy suggestiveness of earlier speculation.

Plato, no doubt, felt he possessed sufficient powers of intellectual discrimination to overcome the naïveté of his predecessors—to manipulate the stories or doctrines he took over and bend them to more properly philosophical purposes. But sometimes his imagination, his poetic propensities if you like, got the better of him, and his message became confused or misleading—a situation that was equally unfortunate whether the fiction was intended, as some hold, for the vulgar, or, as seems more likely, for an intellectual élite.

Now, if the Myths could be regarded as analogous to philosophical *poems*—poems which depend for their philosophical value not on any systematic exposition of doctrine, but on a certain subtle suggestiveness—if they could be regarded as such, some of the defects which we have noted would not weigh too heavily. We should not then have to look for any explicit doctrines; we should be content to share with the author what we might call a philosophically important mood. And at times the Myths do invite us to approach them in this way. But a little reflection must soon convince us that such an attitude will not do, for they are all, to a greater or lesser extent, organically related to the main text in which they are embedded. That is to say, they are either concerned to enforce some doctrine allegorically, or to convey probabilities, or (if Frutiger is correct) to bring out logical relations by means of an idealized (and chronologically false) historical account. And that is why, whenever they suffer from the cloudiness or inconsistencies I have mentioned, they are not a dependable philosophical auxiliary—for they cannot be divorced from their context.

As regards the third point about Plato's use of poetic method—namely, whether it is used to secure acceptance of doctrines through an emotional appeal—we must on the whole acquit Plato of trying to *impose* upon us by his poetry. Not that he does not perhaps try to *persuade* us at times by the sheer beauty of his language, but he

[1] Cf. *Phaedr.* 85C–D, 107A–B; *Phaedr.* 246A; *Tim.* 29C–D, 72D.

usually if not always introduces certain safeguards which show us what he is about. If probabilities are at stake, he warns us either before or after the poetic passage in which their acceptance is pleaded for. Certainly, there are occasions when he seems to wax rhetorical; but it is the "higher rhetoric" of the man who combines "knowledge of truth with the art of persuasion" as set forth in the *Phaedrus*. Nor does it seem reasonable to criticize a philosopher for trying to enthuse us about his doctrines, unless he resorts to rhetorical *tricks*. And Plato does not do this.

Now it has been claimed[1] that the Myths are best explained as a sort of moralizing rhetoric, and it is true that many of them (particularly the eschatological Myths) are instinct with moral preoccupations. It is important, Plato insists, that we should believe in the immortality of the soul (*Phaedo* Myth), in the judgment to come (*Gorgias* Myth) and in personal free-will despite the reign of law (Myth of Er), since thereby we shall be more inclined to tend our souls and practise virtue here on earth. But although this is indicative of a certain type of pragmatism[2] sustained by poetic method, we must not forget that, as already emphasized, safeguards are usually introduced to make it clear that mythical accounts are not representative of *absolute* truth, but only of something approaching truth.[3] Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the immortality of the soul, for instance, is also proved dialectically (to Plato's satisfaction at least) in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*.

It is, however, in the eschatological Myths that we see Plato's own attitude to poetry most clearly exemplified; the poet who is allowed to reside in the ideal State must be interested, we may remember, not in "representation" but in the moral education of mankind. Nevertheless—and this is typical of the complications that beset any attempt to give a rigidly consistent interpretation of Plato's use of Myth—we are not justified in ascribing his mythicizing exclusively to moral preoccupations, for the good reason that not all the Myths have a purely or even mainly moral significance!

I come lastly to poetic method employed in a non-mythical context, and perhaps the best example I can select is Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*,[4] the concluding portion of which was reproduced in the first part of this paper. Here we have propounded, with superb imaginative force, one of Plato's most important philosophical doctrines—a doctrine which (since the Beautiful and the Good are equivalent) was to be set forth more briefly, and quite prosaically, in

[1] E.g. by Hirzel, Teichmüller and Couturat.

[2] For indications of this pragmatic streak cf. *Men.* 81D–E, 86B–C; *Phaedr.* 114C; *Gorg.* 526D–527E; *Rep.* 621B–D.

[3] Cf. *Phaedr.* 114D.

[4] It will be seen, therefore, that I do not hold with Stewart's classification of the main portion of Diotima's speech as a "true Myth."

the sixth Book of the *Republic*. But Diotima's description of the passage from the lower beauties to the highest and most abstract beauty of all—the goal of the philosophic lover—is something that for transparent sincerity, as for verbal beauty, is hard to parallel in the whole history of philosophy. Whether or no there is a significant break at 209E (as Stenzel claims) need not concern us; the whole of the latter part of the speech is an outstanding example of philosophy and poetry combined, and a far better example than the Birth of Eros allegory at the beginning.

Nor is its incantational character philosophically objectionable; for we sense throughout an adequate measure of intellectual control, imposed by the severe dialectical doctrine by which Diotima is inspired. And it is due to the fact that he lacked this measure of control that Shaftesbury, when he tried to be a poet as well as a philosopher,[1] turned out to be such a poor imitator of Plato. He could not avoid rhetorical tricks.

Now although it may be contended that in no circumstances do we require a poetic method of philosophizing to help us to grasp intellectually entertainable doctrines, it is I think true to say that it is precisely by this method that Plato enables us to enter more fully into his vision of truth; and the philosophical value of entering into this vision is recognized by a critic as unfavourable to Plato as Bertrand Russell.[2] All "visions," of course, are liable to a high degree of subjectivity—and therein lies their danger. But therein also lies their value, if they are the visions of a man such as Plato and expressed in a context that is free from mythological trappings. But to appreciate, and profit from, a vision such as that described by Diotima, demands an imaginative effort on the part of the reader that is not always easy to summon forth.

To conclude: it would have been extremely convenient—in that it would have simplified the task of criticism—had it been possible, straightforwardly and unambiguously, either to praise or condemn Plato in so far as he exhibited himself a poetic philosopher. But such a procedure would have appeared quite ludicrous once the complexities of the situation had been grasped. Hence my appraisal has necessarily had to be long and somewhat involved.

[1] In his *Moralists*.

[2] Cf. *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 144–5.

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(*Concluded*)

DISCUSSION

CHANGING METHODS IN PHILOSOPHY[1]

Almost all the original philosophers, from Socrates to the verificationists of the present day, have tried to provide some universally applicable method of eliminating confusion and error from our discourse: this provision of a method of "correcting the understanding" is at least one, and perhaps the principal, of the continuous threads which can be traced in Western philosophy. There was the Socratic method, which requires us to look for real definitions of our fundamental abstract terms: the Cartesian methods of rejecting as possible candidates for knowledge any propositions which do not consist of clear and distinct ideas: the Humean or Empiricist method of dismissing as nonsense any non-tautologous statement which cannot be justified as referring to the order of our sensations: Kant's transcendental method of critical philosophy, which it would certainly be imprudent to characterize in a phrase, but which was equally intended to be a safe protection against empty metaphysics and meaningless questions: lastly, the verification principle, which provides a general method of determining which of our statements conform to some scientific standard of intelligibility, and which are to classed as tautologies or as playing with words. New movements in philosophy have in general been new methods of correcting the understanding, methods which are further generalized and applied in the interval before another great philosopher appears with another general method of showing that all previous metaphysics is nonsense.

One thing is common to anything which in this context deserves the name of a method; it is something which can be formulated and applied. It is something more than a personal style of philosophical criticism, which, as a style, cannot profitably be reduced to a formula and makes no claim to be imitated. Descartes, Hume, Kant and the earlier verificationists were not simply original philosophers who had developed particular procedures of philosophical criticism which were in fact found to produce illuminating results; at least this is not how they thought of themselves. They made a greater claim, laying stress not only or mainly on the conclusions which they reached, the particular answers which they gave to particular philosophical problems, but rather on the general method by which their conclusions were arrived at; they each claimed that by applying the general method which they had first formulated, we can infallibly avoid falling into logical error and sheer nonsense in philosophical and other discussions. They thereby provided a guaranteed, useful employment for their immediate successors, and became the founders of schools, of "isms," because they provided a regular programme of philosophizing; philosophers, who were adherents to these schools, could for a time have the comfortable illusion of being engaged on some definite inquiry, with predetermined limits and recognized canons, almost as though they were scientists or mathematicians; and in fact the claim was usually made that at last the truly scientific method in philosophy had been discovered—until the next revelation arrived, proving that philosophy is really something different.

But—and this is my thesis—in the early decades of this century a gradual,

[1] Address delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute, held at University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C.1, on July 26th, 1950.

at the time almost imperceptible, revolution took place in philosophy, which I think is to be associated first of all with the name of G. E. Moore; the change came so quietly, with such an absence of proclamation and advertisement, that it is only now that its outline and significance have become obvious; yet I think that in the long run it will be seen to have dwarfed in its permanent effects the more advertised programmes of methodologists and verificationists. For while these last were still in the old rationalist tradition intent on proclaiming one more version of the truly scientific philosophy, which by the application of a general logical method would remove all metaphysical puzzles, Moore had proclaimed no method at all; he had simply insisted that we should always weigh our words to be sure that we know what we mean by them, and, secondly, that we should never deny what we already know to be true. He went ahead trying to unravel particular philosophical puzzles one by one, trying in each case to state as precisely as possible what various philosophers had literally meant by their surprising statements, always weighing his own and their words very carefully in the process. The procedure looked, and was, revolutionary, and yet there seemed to be no more to it than this—that in answering any philosophical question Moore always used familiar English words very carefully and literally and insisted that others should do the same. Naturally most philosophers were not at first satisfied with this jejune account of the matter, and many will recall the period in the 1930's when something called "Moore's method of analysis" was constantly discussed by philosophers other than Moore himself. Moore himself had never even admitted that he had a general method, or given it a name, even less had he formulated some procedure as universally applicable in philosophy or as guaranteed to remove metaphysical puzzles; nor had he finally committed himself to any sweeping proposition about what philosophy really is or should be. There was simply a peculiar style, which involved using words with quite unnatural precaution in contexts in which such attention to literal meaning had become very unusual, and in which it was therefore explosive in its effects. Of course attempts have been made to freeze this style and practice into slogan and dogma—"Philosophy is only verbal analysis" or "Metaphysical problems are confusions in the use of ordinary language" and so on. But in these slogans the central suggestiveness and originality of Moore's work seem to me to have been missed; namely, the implication that in philosophy, just because it is not one of the sciences with assigned problems, we can do no better than carefully unravel each perplexity as it presents itself, showing its unclassified oddness, and trying to distinguish the various issues involved in it more clearly. If, in any particular case, we know in advance what kind of problem is involved and to what methods it will yield, we would not be philosophically perplexed; we would wait for the answer from formal logic or psychology or sociology or some other defined discipline. The latent suggestion is that there is no use and no hope in defining the limits and proper subject-matter of philosophy or in looking for a general method of solving its problems; secondly, that the whole programme, which has so long haunted philosophers, of finding a general method of eliminating confusion and logical error from our discourse is misdirected, and begins at the wrong end: that we cannot, and do not need, to do more than try to make clearer, one by one, the sources of the metaphysical puzzles which present themselves as our forms of thought and language change: that—to adapt a phrase of F. P. Ramsey's—we waste time and mislead ourselves if we try to make anything or everything absolutely clear, as opposed to making several distinctions clearer: for to try to make any expression absolutely clear is to try to circumscribe the development of language, and the use of this expression within it: and to try to make all the

permissible uses of language clear is to try to insist that knowledge must always conform to some predetermined pattern. This is the remnant of the last *a priorism* to be discarded by philosophers, the Kantian error still finally surviving. Having ceased to follow Descartes in believing that we can lay down what logical properties a statement must have if it is to be known to be true, empiricist philosophers are now ceasing to believe that we can lay down what logical properties a statement must have if it is to be significant.

Why should we not now finally accept that philosophy itself must always be experimental, and without predetermined limits or anticipated problems? Why should not philosophers use any procedure of analysis which in particular contexts and at particular times seem in fact to bring greater clarity, without stopping to convert these *ad hoc* procedures into general methods or to make universal claims for them? It is just these universal claims and final definitions of the true nature and limits of philosophy which have always proved confusing and restrictive in the long run. I suggest that what is new and genuinely original in contemporary philosophy, or in the best of it, is just the fact that it offers not yet another new method or system, but (almost for the first time) a cultivated absence of method or system, an implied acknowledgment that every advance towards greater clarity about any feature of language or argument must always be partial, provisional and never final: and with this goes the realization that the subject must always be untidy, a changing miscellany of questions, all attempts to find an underlying common origin of philosophical problems seeming only the ghost of the old fallacy that philosophy must have some unique subject-matter of its own—if not Being or Reality, then Language. Of course this refusal to proclaim a recognised subject-matter or method is very inconvenient and difficult to sustain; there is a constant temptation to produce a slogan or unifying formula, and so to make of philosophy a regular discipline with methods which can be transmitted and learnt. But history shows, what could also now be inferred from a better understanding of the development of thought and language, that the proclamation of a universal method of avoiding confusion and logical error always in itself provokes problems of interpretation which are greater than those which it is used to solve. After the experiments of the last thirty years, there is surely no excuse for not knowing that one cannot in this way set limits to the varieties of significant discourse, and so absolve oneself from the step-by-step distinguishing between them, which must be an experimental and unmethodical procedure, depending only on the insight of individual philosophers; all devices are justified in so far as they in effect make several distinctions clearer which were not clear before. The argument between different schools of philosophy can only be as to whether in fact at this stage more problems are likely to be clarified by the construction of new metaphysical systems or by careful attention to the uses of problematical words; my thesis has been that this, like all other questions of method, is an empirical question and not susceptible of an answer *a priori*: one can only judge by actual current results, and can never infer that methods of approach to metaphysical puzzles which have been illuminating in the past, or are illuminating to-day, will continue to be productive in the future. We do not know what the next insight, leading to a new phase of experiment on metaphysical problems, will suggest and from what direction it will come. Perhaps we are now passing through the phase in which logic, properly becoming ever more and more formal, abstract and rigorous, is finally separating itself from philosophy as an utterly independent and methodical discipline, as first physics and then psychology separated themselves before; perhaps it is for this reason that metaphysicians now concentrate mainly on problems about the forms of

Language, as previously on the powers of the Mind or on the nature of Matter and Motion. But whatever the next phase of experiment may be, one may hope that it will not again be denounced and obstructed as not genuinely philosophy in the real and traditional sense of this word.

Finally I must apologize for having been inveigled by the occasion into talking in general about philosophy, rather than about specific problems, even if only in this very negative way. It will not have escaped your notice that the statement that *there* can be *no* generally applicable method of correcting the understanding and of eliminating logical confusion is itself a very general statement. I would need to justify it, as one particular philosophical conclusion among others, by considering what is meant by "clarity," "logical confusion" and "general method" in this context. But it is also a historical conclusion, the result of asking in what respect philosophy, after the teaching of G. E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein, seems to many people to have taken one more turning. The great difference, I suggest, is what resides in what these philosophers so conspicuously have *not* said as much as in what they have said; we are forewarned by their tentative procedures that neither this nor any other turning will be the last. A logical Utopia of absolute and methodical clarity, as envisaged by Descartes, Leibniz and the early verificationists, has been shown to be as useless and in principle unattainable as any other kind of Utopia. And this seems a great liberation, allowing a Fabian approach to the clarification of particular unclassified problems as they arise.

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PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

PHILOSOPHY IN ITALY

The majority of present-day Italian writers on philosophy tend towards spiritualism. I do not mean thereby that spiritualism dominates the climate of Italian philosophical thought of to-day. The philosophical climate of a historical period results from the nature of the problems that are debated; and the problems that are debated nowadays in Italy (as, moreover, in the other countries of the western world) are not offered by new developments of spiritualism, but suggested, or imposed polemically by other currents more decisive in renewing traditional problems, especially by existentialism and the philosophy of science. The fact remains that the majority of the writings on philosophy that are now being published in Italy express some form of spiritualism. This is always a philosophy with a distinct religious character. It originated in the last century in order to safeguard the rights of the "heart" (that is, of religious and moral tradition), first against illuminism, then against positivism. Its themes are prescribed: philosophy understood and practised as analysis of consciousness or introspection; the analysis of consciousness understood as the way to reach from man to God, that is to the origin of every spiritual activity; the negation of the reality of nature and in general of every thing that is outside consciousness, or at least the complete subordination of nature to the spirit through the recognition of the substantial finality of nature itself; the consequent negation of the validity of science as autonomous knowledge and its subordination to philosophy, of which it is considered to be the preparation or imperfect approximation; finally, and in consequence of all this, it is the infallible guarantee offered to man's destiny in this and the other world. A philosophy revolving round such themes customarily claims to be valid as a *preambulum* of religion, and to be solely able to form the basis and justification of religious faith. With this claim it seeks and finds easy proselytes among those who believe that the task of philosophy can only consist in being the apology of religion.

In reality the situation is different, and the apology that spiritualism makes for religion goes most often beyond the mark. If God in His transcendence reveals or manifests Himself fully to man's consciousness so as to form that consciousness intrinsically and determine its character, the man-God relation is necessitated; and in such a case it becomes impossible to refer to God that which is of God and to man that which is of man, because every attitude or manifestation of man becomes attributable to God. And if that is the case, religious faith loses its meritorious character; it becomes necessary certitude, apodictical truth, in the sense in which up to fifty years ago mathematical propositions were considered to be apodictical truths. The most precious teachings of religion, which leads one to hope and to believe but dissuades one from the assurances of pride and the certainties of the Pharisee, are completely lost. When there is established between God and man a relationship of substantial inherence and necessity, religion, in the character that makes it one of the fundamental human experiences, becomes impossible.

Many Italian writers of spiritualistic philosophy take no account of this. The reviews and books of this philosophy are full of new "proofs" of the existence of God, which turn out to be the traditional ones, simply disguised or refurbished with ingenuous and awkward artifices. And they are likewise full of "indubitable certainties" which are assumed when one speaks in the

name of a transcendental principle, and are used to silence adversaries of every kind, and especially those who admit their lack of certainty. Undoubtedly, spiritualism is reinforced in Italy by the exigences of the ideological struggle against communism and its materialistic postulates. It aims at the defence of personal value and liberty; and certainly there are few philosophers in the west nowadays who do not feel solidarity in that defence. But the basic theory of dialectic materialism is that the human person is essentially conditioned by social relations and cannot be understood if those relations are excluded; and against that basis, which expresses an almost unassailable position, spiritualism is completely unarmed. It is a question of understanding that basis and rectifying it, removing from it the deterministic or downright fatalistic character that the philosophy of communism attributes to it. But to oppose it with the simple affirmation that man is "pure inwardness," "spiritual substance," etc., is useless and has only the appearance of trying to destroy an authenticated fact by means of an abstract presupposition.

In this class of work is Angelo Crespi's *Dall'io a Dio* (Modena, Guanda, 1950), published posthumously with a preface by the Italian Ambassador to London, Tommaso Gallarati Scotti. Crespi spent his last years in England, and it is from English culture that he has drawn the most vital elements of his speculation. This work of his, which is also his spiritual testament, was composed during the last war and appears as the expression of an acute and watchful mind, profoundly but not dogmatically religious. It succeeds in being in some way typical of all contemporary spiritualism. Its starting point is that there exists an intimate religious experience, of the same nature as the consciousness, that reveals to man the reality of God, as Spirit and Person; in the same way as sensible experience somehow reveals the reality of the world. This experience is experience of the Transcendent and at the same time of the immanence of the Transcendent in man, whose centre and life it forms. Crespi holds that the traditional proofs of the existence of God preserve their full value, which value is also preserved by the ontological proof, whose nucleus of truth consists in the fact that "in the very recognition of the limitations and of the relativity of our understanding is implicit the presence in us of the perfect and absolute Being, by virtue of which alone every other reality and truth can be revealed as particular and finite." But perhaps the most interesting part of Crespi's book is the last, which concerns history. The immediate relation of man to God is, according to Crespi, the only foundation of historical judgment; since to claim that my historical judgment is truer than that of another historian means that my judgment coincides with the vision that God Himself has of history. To appeal to the vision of God, for Whom all the past (like the present and future) is actual present experience, is the only means, according to Crespi, of escaping out of the relativity of historical judgment and giving a meaning to history. From this gnoseological premise arises the metaphysical view that the transcendent cannot be eliminated from history, because the historical process can only mean the revelation of the Transcendent in time. Only this metaphysical view can give meaning to history, revealing in it "the theatre of education for the triumph of love over death" and in the individuals who make it "the vehicles of absolute Value."

These ideas have undoubtedly been strengthened in Crespi by the work of Toynbee, who has focussed attention on the fundamental importance of religion in history. But Toynbee carefully refrains from transforming this canon of historical intelligibility into a metaphysical principle that would justify, in a religious and optimistic sense, the totality of history. And his

fundamental discovery is, besides, that of the intrinsic problematical character of history, whereby the course of events continually meets bifurcations, hence choices that can in certain cases lead to the death of a civilization or to its preservation or renewal.

Crespi's philosophy of history leads precisely to the result for which he reproves the philosophy of history of Italian idealism, that of justifying everything and everyone in history, which, if it is the field of action of God (albeit by means of human will), can know neither evil nor death. As for basing the truth of historical judgment on the agreement of that judgment with the vision of God, is not this a claim that can be advanced by every historian, and hence invoked to justify opposite and irreconcilable judgments? Moreover, deity can hardly be invoked or adduced as an explanatory principle; as Crespi explicitly affirms, it is unknowable and incomprehensible in itself, and hence cannot furnish any positive canon of comprehension and knowledge. The spiritualistic philosophy, of which Crespi's book is an outstanding example, seems to be made for the man who already enjoys the beatific vision of God. But for man *viator* this philosophy is of scant assistance.

NICOLA ABBAGNANO.

(Translated from the Italian by Beatrice Allen.)

NEW BOOKS

A Critique of Logical Positivism. By C. E. M. Joad. (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd. Pp. 154. Price 10s. 6d.)

In his new book Dr. Joad claims to examine critically the philosophy of logical positivism. He does so in the conviction (suggested to him by a letter to the *New Statesman*) that to be a logical positivist is not only to hold an erroneous philosophy but is to be exposed to social and political views of evil influence and in particular to the doctrines of Fascism. Nevertheless, the main part of the work is concerned with philosophical doctrine: only the concluding pages discuss social and political effects.

Dr. Joad devotes the whole volume to an examination of Professor Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic.* In his Introduction he defends this procedure. He is aware that a great deal of water has flowed under the positivist bridges since 1936 when that volume was first published. He realizes that Professor Ayer's positivism is now *démodé* in professional circles and that almost every single doctrine in *Language, Truth and Logic* would be rejected by philosophers today. But he argues: "The truth is that whatever statement of Logical Positivism one takes, one runs the risk of being told that it is out of date, or that it represents a deviationist view" (p. 16). I think Dr. Joad was right to take a classic text such as Professor Ayer's book and not try to examine contemporary doctrines which are in the melting pot almost before they are in the making. It is doubtful if there are any professional logical positivists today. Logical positivism was a systematic philosophy centred on the elimination of metaphysics by means of the principle of verification. It is now a closed episode. Even Professor Ayer is not what he was. The bold and sweeping claims which he took over from the Vienna Circle and enriched by contributions of his own have melted away. The Introduction to his second edition consists chiefly in adding water to the too heady wine of his first edition. (One may well prefer the resulting drink, though it is less stimulating. I myself being of temperate habits, would prefer the wine to be even more diluted. Dr. Joad, on the other hand, is a total abstainer. He doesn't care where the wine goes so long as it doesn't get into his pure Platonic water.) There are today a number of philosophers loosely united in avoiding (or evading?) metaphysics, in resolving problems by linguistic procedure and in examining the different uses of language. No one need apologize for preferring yesterday's cold joint to the carrot-tops, lentils and parsnips in today's stock-pot, even though he may surmise that they will one day make an appetizing meal. Yet there is an accusation to which Dr. Joad lies open and against which he does not defend himself. It is that he claims to be giving a critique of logical positivism and yet refers only in the most cursory manner to Wittgenstein and Carnap and not at all to Schlick. This is to claim more than is performed. The proper title for the book would have been "A Critique of Professor Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic.*" That is what it is and as such I now propose to discuss it.

Regarded in this light, it suffers from three defects, though these defects do not, in my opinion, prevent it being useful and interesting. First, the criticism is too external. Dr. Joad has never thought, even for a moment, *with* the positivist, never been worried by their problems or tempted by their solutions. They have never shaken him out of his dogmatic slumbers. The second defect is more serious. Dr. Joad has taken too narrow a view of the task he has set

himself. To understand Professor Ayer it is necessary to have read, and even to have read with some sympathy, the work of Moore and Russell. Only then can one grasp certain doctrines which Ayer sketches all too briefly in *Language, Truth and Logic.* Dr. Joad does not show the familiarity one would expect with these doctrines. Thirdly, the arrangement of the material is not good. One is referred more than should be necessary from one chapter to another for information on essential points.

Briefly, Dr. Joad's plan is to discuss in the first six chapters the method of logical positivism; its theory of physical objects, its principle of verifiability, its epistemology, its use of the method of logical constructions and its doctrine of truth: and then, in the three concluding chapters, to discuss the logical positivist account of the self and values and the evil effects of the whole doctrine. I will begin by discussing the major defect in understanding, i.e. Dr. Joad's failure to grasp the related notions of analysis and logical construction, and then pass on to review some of his criticisms which seem to be of interest and value. (I cannot, of course, deal with all of them.)

Analysis and Logical Constructions

The notion of logical construction puzzles Dr. Joad. He devotes the whole of Chapter V to it and discusses it in many other parts of the work. On two occasions he expresses himself at a loss to know what purpose is served by the analysis of statements (pp. 22, 81) and he means not what purpose it does in fact serve but what purpose it is intended to serve by those who practise it. He does not anywhere connect it with the attempt to eliminate seemingly-existent entities such as "the average man" or "the round square" from our vocabulary or to provide us with a minimum vocabulary each word in which stands for an unquestionable existent. In expressing his bewilderment at the practice of analysis he refers in a single sentence to Russell's Theory of Descriptions, and expresses his conviction that analysis is a way of dismissing problems without solving them. It may be so but the claim cannot be treated as cavalierly as this.

What particularly puzzles him when the doctrine of logical constructions is applied to physical things is the fact that those who so apply it continue to speak of physical things in a common-sense way. "Now, if there are no material things but only logical construction (*sic*) and/or sense-contents, the beliefs of common sense are certainly wrong and ought to be despised" (p. 37). Joad here overlooks the obvious claim of analysis. The claim is that the analytical philosopher has no quarrel with the ordinary man. "Of course there are material things" he claims to be saying: "but what are they? They are logical constructions out of sense-contents; or, put in another way, a statement about a particular material thing can always be analysed into a set of statements about actual or possible sense-contents." I have said "The claim is . . ." because I don't accept the claim, any more than Dr. Joad does, at its face value. I think the claim of the analytical philosopher to be accepting the ordinary man's beliefs is a bogus one. My criticism of Dr. Joad is not that he doesn't agree with the theory but that his disagreement can have no effect because he doesn't understand the theory. Consider this other passage, for instance: "Now, actions entail bodies which act unless, which I take to be improbable, it is held that logical constructions can act?" (p. 103). This is, as though, on being told that the average Englishman consumes a 2-lb. loaf of bread daily, and then reading that the average Englishman is a logical construction, one were to exclaim "How could a logical construction eat bread?" This misunderstanding is a widespread one but a professional philosopher should not fall a victim to it.

This same misunderstanding also renders curiously ineffective an argument he uses against Ayer's analysis of the statement *This is white* in terms of similarity to other sense-contents, viz. those I call white. "If the sense-contents *are* without the property, the property, namely, of being white, they can be shown by similar arguments to be without any specifiable property; but if they are without any specifiable property, by what method of selection and discrimination are they classed together in the special relation, the relation, namely, of similarity, into which the property of being white has been analysed?" (pp. 39–40). The trouble here is that the question "Does x have the property of whiteness?" in ordinary language means merely "Is x white?" whereas in philosophical discussion it means "Is there something over and above resemblance in virtue of which x is said to be white?" Hence to do away with properties in the philosophical sense is not to do away with them in the ordinary sense.

I turn now to consider some of the merits of the *Critique*.

The Principle of Verification

In dealing with the Principle of Verifiability (as Dr. Joad calls it) he points out that, as formulated, it blurs the vital distinction between assertions as to the meaning of a statement and assertions as to the conditions which must be satisfied if it is to have meaning. This is an important and correct criticism. He goes on to point out that to say that a material thing's existence is verified by the occurrence of sense-contents is *not* to say that it can be defined in terms of the sense-contents that verify it. Less original, though equally sound, are the other general criticisms brought against the principle. They are:—(i) No reasons are given for accepting it. (ii) The meaning of a statement cannot depend on its verification. For what we mean must first be known if we are to recognize the verifying experiences as verificatory. (Both these criticisms appear under criticism (1) p. 46.)

A special criticism of the principle as applied to material objects is as follows:—(i) On Professor Ayer's view, no proposition is certain, not even a proposition referring to a sense-content such as "This is hard." (Though he changed his view on this point in his second edition.) (ii) Such a proposition is therefore always in the position of a statement that awaits verification. (iii) Its meaning, therefore, will be analysable in terms of other statements referring to sense-contents. (iv) These statements in turn will require to be analysed in terms of statements referring to sense-contents. How then can a statement ever be verified?—At this point Dr. Joad might profitably have considered the doctrine of protocol statements.

The status of the principle is treated in Chapter IV. Dr. Joad first establishes, without much difficulty, that the principle is not empirical since it is neither about words as marks on paper nor about words as sounds nor about the way people use words. Nor on the other hand is it a tautology, since this would render any conclusions from it tautologous. It is, Dr. Joad concludes, a "philosophical" principle (which later on the same page (p. 71) becomes "metaphysical"). I think he is right in contending that it is a philosophical principle, and even in a sense a metaphysical principle; but all he has actually shown is that it is either a third kind of proposition not provided for in the positivist fork, or not a proposition. Dr. Joad knows that the fashionable way out for the positivist is to say that it is not a proposition but a proposal, rule, recommendation or something of the sort. But he comments quite rightly on this way out: "Anybody can issue a proposal or make a recommendation, but whether the recommendation is to be accepted and the proposal adopted by philosophers will depend on considerations which are independent of the

verification principle" (p. 73). This is a point which is not new but needs to be made still because post-positivist thought is not facing up to the difficulty. It simply will not do to say, with Carnap, "Expedience," or to use the magic word "performatory" to characterize any statement which is not a proposition.

Words

In what he has to say about words and their status, Dr. Joad is mainly concerned to make the point that "words are not treated by logical positivists as other 'things' are treated, but are accorded privileged treatment" (p. 85). I have not altogether understood his rather complicated argument on pp. 82–85. But the gist of it is that to know a verbal fact, some non-verbal knowledge is required, that is, the non-verbal knowledge involved in knowing written words on paper or spoken words.

Sensationalism

Dr. Joad attacks the notion that all experience is sensory by bringing forward instances of what he claims to be non-sensory experiences. Reflecting upon the facts of history, doing mental arithmetic, deciding what to do, giving way to temptation, having an aesthetic experience—all these, he argues, are, at least in part, non-sensory. What he says on this score is suggestive but would bear further elaboration.

Phenomenalism

Surprisingly, Joad never singles out this important topic for separate discussion. He does, however, in discussing historical propositions, say something about it which is of interest. He is attacking Ayer's account in his second edition of historical propositions, viz. that to say that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815 means that certain observations would be made if certain conditions were fulfilled. Joad counters by saying that "it is only because we *already know* that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in June, 1815, that we are in a position to assert that the observations in question would have been made, if the conditions in question had been fulfilled" (p. 57). This criticism is not specially connected with historical propositions. It is really a challenge to phenomenalism. It might be generalized in this way:—Corresponding to any categorical proposition (other than an observation proposition), such as (*a*) *There is a chair in the next room*, are a large number of hypothetical propositions such as (*b*) *If I were, etc. . . . I would see. . . .* Whenever I am believing a proposition of group (*b*) my reason for doing so is always that I am believing its parent categorical (*a*). Ayer might admit this but insist that it required further analysis; that my reason is always some *other* (*b*) propositions. On his view the (*a*) proposition is analysable without remainder into (*b*) propositions. He is compelled, however, to add "into an infinite number." And this seems to constitute the breakdown of the phenomenalist analysis. For it is to admit that a proposition of type (*a*) is *not* analysable into a finite number of propositions of type (*b*). And what is this but to admit that the propositions are of different types? Every material thing statement is a widow's cruse capable of producing innumerable hypothetical statements, no finite collection of which ever exhausts its significance.

Values

Since the whole purpose of the *Critique* is to show the corrupting effect of logical positivism the chapters on ethics, aesthetics and religion are in a sense the most important. Here Dr. Joad widens somewhat the scope of his survey

to include an account of subjective and objective theories of ethics and a criticism of Russell's ethical views as well as those of Professor Ayer.

His criticism of Russell is that the simple emotive theory of ethics is inconsistent with the moral judgments which Russell puts forward and the claim he makes for them as more than expressions of personal feeling. Joad is in principle right here. The inconsistency between Russell's "scientific" philosophy and his ethics is glaring.

In criticizing the Emotive theory Joad makes two criticisms: (1) "It is not by the word 'feeling' that the experiences which ethical judgments express are adequately denoted, but by some such word as 'attitude' (p. 127). The reason is that elements of reason and will, as well as feeling, are included in attitude. All this seems to me quite clearly right. Dr. Joad goes further and asserts that the part reason plays is that of furnishing an apprehension which is "both cognitive and normative" (p. 126). This may or may not be true. But it requires argument and Dr. Joad produces none. (2) "The logical positivist view fails to account for the origin and for the distinctive use of ethical terms" (p. 128). This is, again, a sound criticism and it is well made by Dr. Joad. It is not new, of course, though it may well be that Dr. Joad conceived it without external aids, since he does not mention any external source. About a third argument directly in favour of an objective view I cannot feel so happy. (3) "It is hard to see how a moral or a religious judgment can have grown up in response to the influence of an environment which was destitute of moral or religious factors" (p. 133). It may be objected that this would prove too much. How could man respond to his environment in the way of knowing it unless there is a knowledge factor in the environment? Cannot man originate or must he merely mirror?

Although Dr. Joad's criticisms of Professor Ayer's version of the Emotive theory seem to be sound on the whole he is capable of misunderstanding Ayer even here. For instance, he says: "He (sc. Ayer) says that 'argument is possible on moral questions only if some system of values is presupposed.' But, he goes on, 'What we do not and cannot argue about is the validity of these moral principles.' Since he denies the existence of moral principles, he is driven to conclude that no argument is possible about moral questions" (p. 137). This completely misrepresents Ayer. It is not because he denies moral principles but because he denies that they are propositions that Ayer concludes that we cannot argue about them.

Conclusions

When he comes to discuss the evil effects of logical positivism Dr. Joad has to face the objection that radical empiricism of which he takes logical positivism to be the modern version, so far from encouraging authoritarian, Fascist views, has tended to be liberal and anti-authoritarian. He argues as follows:

(1) Reject the conception of objective value and life disintegrates into dilettantism in all spheres.

(2) Interpret religious statements as emotive and the emotion they are supposed to express will evaporate since it is, and needs to be, sustained by the belief in an existent Deity.

(3) A logical positivist might accept, e.g. Christian miracles not as miraculous but as inexplicable natural phenomena; but he is not likely to remain in this half-way house. He is likely to deny them altogether.

(4) Hence, in general, logical positivism will induce scepticism about ethics and religion.

(5) The vacuum created will be filled by undesirable beliefs. People will feel

the need to believe something; and the need to believe something tends to generate violent and intolerant beliefs.

These contentions seem to me to have some truth but to stand in need of some qualification. Why, for instance, is Fascism the main evil? I should have thought that we had at least as good reason to regard Communism as an evil and perhaps a more threatening evil, and a logical positivist could, I think, evolve some brand of Neo-Leninism without too much difficulty. (Though he would have to find his way somehow round Lenin's attack on Phenomenalism in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.) Communism, with its anti-mystical, anti-theistic, and relativistic background and its treatment of moral and religious concepts as ideological weapons in practical life and not intellectual concepts seems a highly plausible destination for a logical positivist suffering from a belief-vacuum. In fact, I half expected that Dr. Joad might accuse Professor Ayer of being a fellow-traveller. I am afraid part of the emphasis on Fascism springs from the fact that Dr. Joad took his text from a letter to the *New Statesman*. Had there been an attack on logical positivism in the *Tablet* it might have been different. To bring in Fascism as the arch enemy is to suggest that the logical positivist's real danger is that he will inevitably react from his sterile intellectualist empiricism into a sub-Hegelian *furor metaphysicus* with a tendency to violence.

The real danger is surely much less specific than all this suggests. The effect of logical positivism is to contract the area in which rational activity is held to be at work, so much so that it leaves the affairs of social life as an arena only for non-rational—which will thereby tend to be irrational—activity. Hence the likely effect is that either the logical positivist will continue to live by his current conventions or he will change and if he changes he will tend to do so more irrationally than other people. Which of these happens will be decided by temperamental and environmental factors rather than by the theory itself.

Even so I think Dr. Joad has overlooked one other possible reaction, that towards a saner and sounder philosophy. The neo-positivist descendants of Logical positivism do not in fact abandon the areas which they find placarded with evacuation notices. They stay there and find ways of engaging in rational discussion even on matters allegedly non-rational. In ethics they make proposals and counter-proposals (not, of course, propositions). Quite soon it may be discovered that proposals can be supported by reasons (not, of course, by reasoning) and may be more or less acceptable (not, of course, right or wrong). Dr. Joad has left the game too soon. Had he stayed after 1936 he would have seen much to console his spirit and, I believe, to improve his mind. He would have seen that the future cannot lie in completely rejecting logical positivism, the fruits (however bitter in part) of an unrivalled development in logical technique. A lot of time has been spent in revising the rules of the game and in trying out some very simple new rules which make the game look very different. But play, I believe, will shortly be resumed on more M.C.C. lines. I hope we may then see Dr. Joad bowling an over instead of throwing brickbats from the grandstand.

WINSTON H. F. BARNES.

Mill's Utilitarianism *reprinted with a study of the English Utilitarians*. By JOHN PLAMENATZ. (Oxford: Blackwell. 1949. (Blackwell's Political Texts.) Pp. 228. Price 10s. 6d.)

This volume is a valuable addition to its series, giving, besides a reprint of *Utilitarianism*, a study of the movement from Hobbes to the younger Mill which actually occupies most of the volume (pp. 1–160). Mr. Plamenatz's

essay is not easy reading (why should it be?), but it is scholarly and penetrating, and it fills a serious gap in our philosophical literature; no other work covers its ground in quite the same way, and we are placed conspicuously in the author's debt.

After a preliminary statement of the main tenets of the utilitarian school, and of its general characteristics, in which Mr. Plamenatz corrects Halévy's overemphasis of the importance of continental thinkers in its development—on p. 48 he describes his work as "most interesting but often misleading"—he turns to the discussion of Hobbes, and shows well how his use of medieval terms while perverting their meaning has obscured the debt of the utilitarians to him. Perhaps Mr. Plamenatz overemphasizes the debt—but of this more anon. Thence he turns to Locke—to the *Essay* rather than the *Second Treatise*—and from Locke to Hume, of whose views he speaks at some length, political as well as moral. Brief but useful remarks on Helvetius, Beccaria, Paley and Burke lead on to Bentham, followed by sketches of the utilitarian affinities of Paine and Godwin, by a chapter on James Mill and by another and particularly helpful one on Adam Smith, Malthus and Ricardo. The study of J. S. Mill concentrates on *Liberty*, *Utilitarianism* and *Representative Government*, and Mr. Plamenatz closes with general remarks on utilitarianism's view of the relations of the individual to the state, contrasting it with such continental approaches as those of Rousseau and Saint-Simon.

This brief sketch will have shown that Mr. Plamenatz's study is highly concentrated and rich in material for thought, and if I turn now to a few points where disagreement or difference of emphasis seems possible, its merits will not, I hope, be thereby obscured. It is a pity that the pages on "The Theory and its Origins" say nothing of its ancestry in Epicureanism: Epicureanism enjoyed some vogue in the seventeenth century, and Hobbes had contacts with Gassendi. But, in spite of this and of some remarks in *Human Nature* (chap. vii), can we, with Mr. Plamenatz (p. 7) and others, speak of Hobbes as an egoistic hedonist? For the Hobbes of the *Leviathan*, surely (as for the nineteenth-century antagonist of utilitarianism, Nietzsche), man's primary aim is not pleasure but power—"a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death" (chap. xi). Mr. Plamenatz is right to point out the contrast between the terms Hobbes uses and the application he gives them, but perhaps he goes too far when he writes "Hobbes misleads his reader, and perhaps also himself by his account of the sovereign's institution, of which he says that it involves the transfer of natural rights. . . . Now, a natural right of the sort described by Hobbes cannot be transferred" (p. 13). Hobbes's language is confusing, but does he mean more than that the subjects place their own power at the disposal of the sovereign? And when he speaks of the sovereign as bearing the "persons" of his subjects, is this "mystical" (p. 13), and not rather legal, artificial though it be? It is the whole legal texture of Hobbes's mind that differentiates him from the utilitarians—even from Bentham.

Mr. Plamenatz minimizes the importance of Hutcheson. When he writes (p. 37) "The influence of Hobbes on Hume is as much negative as positive, but it is incomparably greater than that of any other thinker," Hutcheson's name springs to mind (cf. Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*), and one ventures a mild protest on reading again (p. 48) that he is not of great importance in the history of moral thought. Again, one can hardly ask for more in a work so compressed as this, but while he denies that benevolence is the whole of virtue Butler has, in one of his many strains, a place in the tradition of theological utilitarianism that leads from Locke to Paley (cf. *Ser.* iii *ad fin.*, xi *ad fin.*). Mr. Plamenatz emphasizes the contrast between

Hume and Bentham due to the moral sense of the former, but when he has made all his qualifications can he still call Hume "the founder of utilitarianism" (p. 22)? It is a moot point.

The central core of the book is excellent, and the treatment of the classical economists should prove invaluable to the layman. The chapter on J. S. Mill centres entirely about *Utilitarianism*, *Liberty* and *Representative Government*. It would have been helpful had reference been made to the science of ethology on which Mill hoped to base his new morality (*System of Logic*, Book VI), and the mention of this brings us to what is, perhaps, a serious defect in the book—its neglect of the epistemological affinities of the moral theories it treats. This is not unconscious, for Mr. Plamenatz remarks of utilitarianism (p. 2) that "it is intimately connected with English empiricism, although there is no logical necessity in the connexion." This is true only if one is a purist in one's use of the term "logical necessity," and the moral sense school on the one hand and the "inductive method" of J. S. Mill on the other can only be seen in their true light when viewed as two answers to the problem set by Lock's empiricism: "If sense-perception is the sole source of knowledge, how can moral knowledge be possible?" It was Hume and Kant who, in their different ways, saw this most clearly.

Mr. Plamenatz carries his study no further than the younger Mill, omitting the later utilitarians, whether public figures like Cornewall Lewis or academic like Sidgwick, and also such antagonists as John Grote, Martineau and the idealists. In so compact a space one would be churlish to ask for more, but the idealists have a special interest here, both because their attack was epistemological as well as moral, and because they sent into the world public men like Haldane in some slight degree comparable with the philosophical radicals. Mr. Plamenatz's final verdict on the utilitarian school is severe, but it is just. For if we ask "What are the main developments of ethics since Kant?", there is only one, the treatment of intrinsic goods, to which the utilitarians made a notable contribution, and even here their treatment is strikingly defective—though the hesitancies of J. S. Mill point forward to the advances of Moore.

But such points as I have mentioned leave Mr. Plamenatz's still a very good book. Among minor matters, at p. 5 he seems to accept Moore's classification of psychology and sociology as natural sciences. One sees what is meant, but is not the expression unfortunate? Contrariwise, at p. 146 he defends Mill against Moore as being able to distinguish the quality of pleasures, but I am not sure that I follow. P. 16 speaks truly of the utilitarian preference for freedom over absolutism, but one may remember among the later utilitarians the attack on Mill's *Liberty* in James Fitzjames Stephen's *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873).

At p. 17, n. 4, read "I. 3. 6"; at p. 24, l. 22, for "exciting" read "exerting"; at p. 34, n. 1, read "p. 477"; at p. 42, l. 21, for "house" read "horse"; the date of Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (p. 52) is 1785; at p. 133, n. 1, read "¶5," at n. 2 read "¶6"; at p. 142, n. 2, read "¶18." At p. 190, ll. 9–10, for "system or morals" read "system of morals"; at p. 218, l. 5 from the bottom, for "much" read "fierce."

The text of *Utilitarianism* appears unfortunately to neglect changes made by Mill in later editions: it lacks the important footnote added in chap. 2 (p. 180) on the distinction between motive and intention, and the paragraph beginning "In most, if not in all languages . . ." (p. 210) was considerably rewritten later.

D. A. Rees.

The Arts and Their Interrelations. By Thomas Munro. (The Liberal Arts Press, New York. 1949. Pp. 559. Price $7.50).

This is a long book and without doubt a very informative book—although many, I fear, will find it unnecessarily prolix. Broadly speaking, it is a series of classifications of the arts from every conceivable angle, the object being to bring out their similarities and differences. In addition, suggestions are made "for improvements in the present terminology and conceptual apparatus for scientific study of the arts." Dr. Munro, who is now Curator of Education at the Cleveland Museum of Art, has set himself to gather together under one cover an enormous amount of data, including the opinions of philosophers on art from Plato onwards and a plethora of definitions culled from dictionaries and other sources. The definitions (often lengthy) are usually reproduced *in toto*, exhaustively discussed, and amended according to the author's own "naturalistic" and pragmatic approach to aesthetic theory. (The influence of Dewey is all-pervading.)

There is little doubt that this detailed and systematic presentation of opinion will prove a useful quarry of information for students of the history of art and likewise for students of aesthetics. But philosopher-aestheticians, although they will find many interesting points raised which often escape their notice, will also find much to criticize. Here, for instance, is a random selection from Dr. Munro's tentative list of one hundred visual and auditory arts (which he arranges alphabetically): (14) Ceramics, (15) Circuses, (16) City planning; community planning, (65) Oratory; speech, diction, eloquence, elocution, recitation, (66) Packaging, (72) Plastics, decorative and representative uses of, (73) Poetry; verse. Nothing, it is obvious, which can lay some faint claim to be called an "art" is to be allowed to slip through Dr. Munro's net.

Now it is right that we should not adopt a snobbish attitude as regards what may qualify as an art; and it is equally right (as Munro insists) that the traditional classification of the arts into "fine" and "servile" or "useful" should go by the board—indeed, some philosophers have already gone to the extent of denying the possibility of any valid system of classification at all. But Dr. Munro is so anxious to be generous that he is prepared to ignore or blur the useful distinction between art proper and mere crafts and skills. It is true that art (and especially great art) *involves* craftmanship or a high degree of technical skill, but art itself (considered as an activity) is not to be equated to either craft or skill, for it transcends both. Conversely, many human activities—the making of refrigerators, for instance—exhibit or can exhibit some degree of artistry, without our having to give them a place alongside painting and sculpting. Dr. Munro, however, finds it necessary to give careful consideration to the claim of coal-mining to be classified as one of the arts; and although he manages to reject this claim, he has no hesitation in awarding an honoured place in both his tentative and final lists to city planning. But is it not better to regard city planning as a science or skill—even if it does involve the intended employment of artists, along with sanitary engineers?

Many will hold that the principal weakness of this sort of classification is that it overlooks the fundamental characteristic of all genuine artistic activity, which is, quite simply, the expression of emotion. But this apparent oversight is in fact intentional; for Dr. Munro has gone back to the old (and now usually discarded) technical theory of art. Thus, from the multitude of definitions he cites and discusses, he favours the following: Art is skill in providing stimuli to satisfactory aesthetic experience (p. 108). Moreover, his "naturalistic" approach impels him to make other equally dubious claims. For instance, "aesthetics follows the lead of psychology in becoming a separate, descriptive

science" (p. 224); or, worse still, "Applied psychology, teaching the artist how to control human emotions, will contribute further toward making the 'technic of fine arts' a kind of applied science" (p. 233).

I mention these points not to belittle Dr. Munro's achievement—which, as a general survey of the arts and of ideas about them, is monumental; but because, having stated at the outset that much of his book is philosophical in scope and purpose, he must necessarily be prepared to encounter criticism from a philosophical point of view. J. HARTLAND-SWANN.

Man Against Myth. By BARROWS DUNHAM. (London: Frederick Muller Ltd. 1948. Pp. 255. Price 10s. 6d.)

The first paragraph of the preface of this book runs thus: "Professor Broad once observed that all good ideas, when they die, go to America, where they are raised again in the writings of the philosophers. To this it may be replied, perhaps, that if the ideas are good, they deserve survival, and that in any case they may have died because the environment forsook them." Now I dislike misquotation of the classics (except when it is facetious); and what Broad actually wrote, in the passage that is unmistakably referred to, is this: "All good *fallacies* go to America when they die and rise again as the latest discoveries of the local professors."[1] This is a bad beginning, even if the excuse be offered that the author is an American professor, and I fear it is not altogether redeemed.

Professor Dunham's aim is the debunking of "myths," a "myth" being what is popularly called a "popular fallacy," such as "That you can't change human nature," "That thinking makes it so," "That you cannot mix art and politics," "That you cannot be free and safe" and so on. (The fact that there is a much more important and profound sense of the word "myth" seems scarcely to have occurred to the author, but that is another matter.) Now the debunking is executed with verve and wit, aphorisms and bright turns of phrase crowd in upon each other on every page, and if the reader can avoid exasperation he is likely to be much entertained; moreover many of the "myths" discussed are undoubtedly both confused and pernicious in all sorts of ways, and there is value in having a criticism of them which is capable of reaching a wider public than the average philosophical book ever can. Nevertheless the book is marred throughout by at least two serious flaws.

One is bias. I fear that the upshot of the whole book is not the abolition of myths and their replacement by science and reason, but the substitution of one set of myths for another. For example, the author's general theory of myths is that, whatever their actual origin, they are propagated and turned into social forces by the over-privileged in their own interests, and that their function is to keep the masses in fetters and misery by either paralyzing action or diverting it into channels which will benefit the reactionaries and the fascists. Of course there is *something* in all this, but as used by Professor Dunham it seems to me to be itself an excellent example of a myth (in his sense), albeit a second-order one.

The other is superficiality. The author is at home and perfectly competent when he is showing up the confusions of thought of the average journalistic man; but when he deals with seriously thought-out philosophical or theological

[1] *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 55. My italics, of course. I hasten to add that the view expressed is Broad's, not mine.

positions it is usually difficult to be convinced that he has really understood what he is attacking. The best example of this is probably the chapter which stands apart from the rest, in that it is directed not against a popular belief but against a philosophical doctrine (Logical Positivism), viz. that entitled "That all problems are really verbal," the effect of which is more likely to be the conversion of the reader to Logical Positivism on compassionate grounds than the one the author intended; the attempt to refute the emotive theory of ethics by deliberately playing on our *emotions* by accounts of concentration camps and Nazi atrocities seems to me especially ill-conceived.

It would be unjust not to recognize that the book is inspired by an obviously sincere passion for the freedom, prosperity and enlightenment of the underprivileged masses of mankind; nevertheless it claims to be philosophy and it is as philosophy that I have tried to judge it here.

GEORGE E. HUGHES.

Moral Obligation. Essays and Lectures. By H. A. PRICHARD. (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1949. Price 15s. net.)

The first quarter of this book consists of three previously published papers: *Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?* (1912); *Duty and Ignorance of Fact* (1932); *The Meaning of ἀγαθόν in the Ethics of Aristotle* (1935). The editor, Sir David Ross, has not reprinted the inaugural lecture on "Duty and Interest" (1928) on the ground that most of it is used in the chapters here published for the first time of an unfinished book on "Moral Obligation" (1937). This long essay covers seventy-seven pages, about half of the second and hitherto unpublished part of the present book. It discusses more fully than the lecture some doctrines which Prichard thought it important to refute; it also contains a more explicit positive statement than had been available of what Prichard held to be true and certain about moral obligation. This essay is preceded by a shorter discussion of Green's Principles of Political Obligation, which reinforces some of the critical theses of the longer work. Finally, there are seven short papers, covering thirty-six pages, four of which deal with questions about obligation and three with the psychology of motivation and action.

Prichard's quality as a philosophical thinker and writer is well known and beyond dispute, and has been happily described in Professor Price's memoir in the papers of the British Academy. But, since much of the thought expressed in this book is devoted to destroying the views of others, something may be said here about his merits as a critic. In reading what others had written he searched with microscopic care for their real arguments and presuppositions. If he detected error or fallacy in the central argument, he was not prepared to spend time looking for incidental half-truths. The following comment on Green is characteristic: "And here it may, I think, be fairly asserted that it is one of those theories about which, when its nature is grasped, little need be said, the main difficulty being to discover it" (p. 76). His detective work was acute and thorough; his diagnosis was often unexpected, always suggestive but not always convincing (e.g. parts of his most interesting interpretation of the Ethics of Aristotle). A critic of this kind whose approach is determined by his own independent insight into the questions at issue may occasionally miss something which is true and important in the author he studies. But he does as much to increase historical understanding as the commentator who has looked at the facts only through the spectacles provided by his author. No doubt truth can sometimes be won by indirect methods: something is learned by working out the consequences even of quite unplausible premises.

But, perhaps especially in moral philosophy, there is much to be learned from Prichard's persistence in confronting theories with the truths of which we feel assured when we reflect directly, and with the intense care which is needed if we are to avoid confusion, on the facts from which we start.

The date (1912) of the *Mind* article is earlier by twenty years than the next paper here published. But it is striking to see how many of the positions which Prichard held to the end are already forcibly stated. His main thesis is that, just as it is a mistake to look for a criterion of knowledge, so it is a mistake to look for reasons for fulfilling obligations "in terms either of the agent's happiness or of the goodness of something involved in the action" (p. 2). Limits of space make it impossible here to describe except in the barest outline the development of Prichard's views. He already held in 1912 that "the rightness or wrongness of an act has nothing to do with any question of motives at all" (p. 6), and uses the argument that the sense of obligation is a motive which presupposes the recognition of acts as right irrespective of motive. The moral goodness of an action, on the other hand, is derivative from the goodness of its motive, viz. the goodness of either the sense of obligation or of some virtuous desire. These two motives are specifically different, but are found together in the best actions and men. Prichard does not tell us here whether it makes sense to ask whether virtue is better, or less good, than conscientiousness. So far as I know he did not return to the question.

In one important respect the doctrine of the 1912 article was later abandoned by Prichard. In the article he holds the "objective" view that "the rightness of an action consists in its being the origination of something of a certain kind A in a situation of a certain kind, a situation consisting in a certain relation B of the agent to others or to his own nature" (p. 7). Later, for reasons given in his closely argued British Academy lecture, he held that what was morally obligatory was the performance of an activity which, as in the case of paralysis, might not be the origination of anything, the obligation depending solely on the agent's beliefs as to the likelihood that the activity would have certain consequences. It must be noticed that what Prichard calls the "subjective" view is subjective only in the sense of making obligation depend on the agent's beliefs about matters of fact; not in the sense of making it depend on the agent's beliefs as to what, if the facts are as he believes, it is right for him to do. He seems to have held that, while claims are grounded on factual beliefs, the obligation is to discharge the claim which is strongest, not the claim which the agent believes to be strongest. But it has never been wholly clear to me why Prichard was not, if I understand him, prepared to discuss the considerations which have led many to swallow and commend this further dose of subjectivism.

The distinctive contentions of the chapters on Moral Obligation can be summarized as answers to two main questions:

(1) What is the nature of duty? ("What is it for someone to be morally bound to do some action?"). Prichard agrees with Kant in drawing a strict line between the moral and the non-moral uses of "ought." Kant was wrong to use the same word ("imperative") in referring to both. Prichard also agrees with Kant that "I ought" in a non-moral sense makes an hypothetical assertion: I must act so if I am to realize my purpose. In its moral use "I ought" makes a categorical assertion: it asserts the possession by me of a unique "attribute"—"the kind of attribute is *sui generis*, and therefore incapable of having its nature expressed in terms of anything else" (p. 94). It does not assert that I "feel constrained," nor that I am commanded. The analogy between the moral law and the law of the land is "only mischievous" (p. 95). Prichard is here expressing a view radically opposed to contemporary

trends. It is becoming almost an orthodoxy to say that moral principles are "imperatives." Kant's ethics and Hume's epistemology can lie down together under the wide umbrella of this formula. If the formula means only that moral principles are sometimes expressed in a certain grammatical mood, this is not news. Does it mean that they are the actual (or hypothetical) orders of some actual (or hypothetical) imponent? Or that they somehow resemble such orders? Prichard's use of "attribute" is a queer extension of the word. And his insistence on the "uniqueness" of the attribute seems to discourage unduly the noting of resemblances and differences between moral and other sorts of rules. But I think that it is important to recognize how little has yet been done towards producing a clear and acceptable alternative to the view he states.

(2) Why should a man do his duty? There is no answer. The attempt to give one leads either to the reduction of the moral to the prudential "ought" (Bentham, Mill, Green) or to the inevitably unsuccessful attempt to show that the doing of duty "by its very nature carries happiness with it" (Plato). Green is elaborately dissected: Prichard argues that his concept of the "common good" implies that different individuals are "really the same individual" (p. 125). I think that there is more to be said on Green's side than Prichard allows; but this would be a long story. In the concluding chapters of the essay an argument which may be stated as follows is used against any attempt to derive the obligation to do an action from its goodness. An action's possession of some character can imply only its possession of some other character. Hence, if the goodness of the action implied an obligation to do it, the fact that there is such an obligation would be the fact that the action, if it were done, would have the character of "ought-to-existness." This cannot be so because the fact that a man has an obligation is not hypothetical.

In conclusion I can only glance at the doctrine of the two short papers which deal with "willing" (pp. 184–98). Their main contentions are the following. (1) An action is a mental "activity of willing some change," and usually causes some change in our nerve-cells or in our mind (pp. 187, 193). Willing cannot be resolved into anything else, e.g. resolving, attending, consenting, identifying oneself with some object of desire (p. 190). (2) It is a necessary condition of my willing a change that I should come to be in a state of "desiring to will it more than I am averse to willing it" (pp. 185, 196, 198). (3) What is willed is the occurrence of a "change of state of some thing or person" and not the origination of a change; for we originate by willing and it is impossible to will to will (p. 192). For good reasons Prichard here abandons the expression "setting oneself to cause" which in 1932 he had oddly held to be "the phrase in use" (p. 189). (4) The occurrence of actions is inconsistent with the conservation of energy and, unless we include in nature minds as well as bodies, with the uniformity of nature (pp. 193, 194). Of these statements the one which I find most difficult to interpret is the second, that a condition of my willing a change is my "desiring to will it more than I am averse to willing it." I think that we should have been given a fuller account of what this statement means, and of the reasons for accepting it. Plainly, the whole doctrine is inconsistent with current opinions in more than one respect; in particular because it implies a mind-body dualism which reminds us of Descartes and Locke. This comment would not, I think, have struck Prichard as being a criticism. It was his considered view that minds and bodies are things different in kind, and that there is mutual interaction between them.

W. F. R. Hardie.

Reflections of a Physicist. By P. W. Bridgman. Philosophical Library: New York. Pp. xii + 392.

The author of this work is Professor of Physics in the Lyman Physical Laboratory, Harvard, and well known for his experimental work on the physics of matter under very high pressures, for which he received a Nobel Prize. But he is also well known for his insistence on what he calls the "operational method" in physical thinking and in analysing the concepts of physics—which is essentially the notion underlying logical positivism. He has recently been visiting this country, and many readers of Philosophy will have had an opportunity of hearing his views on the philosophy of science at first hand. The present volume was published during his visit: it consists of addresses and essays on divers occasions, from 1929 onwards, dealing partly with the operational method, partly with the relation of the physicist to society, with such other unclassifiable contributions as those on "the time scale," the second law of thermodynamics and "the nature and limitations of cosmical inquiries." It is capable of being read with pleasure by non-physicists.

Bridgman would not claim to have originated the operational method, which might be defined as the search for the meaning of a concept in terms of the actual physical operations implied in practice in its application. Its most notable achievement in the modern era of physics was its application by Einstein in 1905 to the analysis of the notion of simultaneity by consideration of the actual tests one would make to ascertain whether two events were simultaneous in a defined sense. Einstein has since then been called over the coals by Bridgman and others for forsaking the operational method, but that does not impair the greatness of his contribution in 1905. Bridgman writes (p. 29): "One of the greatest advantages of an operational breakdown of a situation is that it reduces it to a description of an actual happening—of something that has actually been done or that has actually occurred—and therefore it has the validity of actual experience." Extreme disciples of the operational method would forbid the use of any symbol in applied mathematics which could not at once be translated into the observations which along could determine it. Schrödinger's ψ-function in wave mechanics is an example of the non-operational use of a symbol. Kinematical relativity is, on the other hand, completely operational in principle. But I think Bridgman goes too far in saying (p. 97) that "our fundamental dictum is that things which cannot in principle be measured have no meaning." He applies this to the detailed processes occurring, for example, in the collision of an electron and a photon, and says that an analysis of it has no meaning. Einstein would, I think, nowadays deny this, regarding Schrödinger's function as a mere statistical entity, destined to give way in time to a more actual analysis.

Bridgman is seriously inconvenienced in some contexts by his over-emphasis on the experimental. For example (p. 128) he says that "the law of gravitation should not be formulated baldly as the law of the inverse square, but rather that the attraction varies as the inverse square within certain limits of error." This ignores the claims of Eddington on the one hand and kinematic relativity on the other to be able to *deduce* such laws as theorems. No one is ever likely to prove a theorem to the effect that the attraction lies between $r^{-2-\varepsilon}$ and $r^{-2+\varepsilon}$; it comes out cleanly as r^{-2}.

This attitude in turn causes Bridgman to adopt an unduly sceptical point of view in his essay on the limitations of cosmology. According to this, calculations of temperatures and pressures in, say, the interiors of stars, or in the sun's corona, are extrapolations far outside present experimental knowledge, and therefore to be treated with mistrust; but from the point of view of a different philosophy of science, they are calculated by applying laws whose

logical "sanction" transcends merely experimental verification, in that they are of the nature of theorems. Again, I do not see how there can be statistical laws without behind them microscopic laws. Bridgman considers small-scale events as unpredictable, although the statistical average of large numbers of them is highly regular and predictable.

Bridgman is very sound on the idea of time. He says explicitly that in any operational view of the meaning of natural concepts the notion of time must be used as a primitive concept, which cannot be analysed and can only be accepted, so that it is meaningless to speak of a reversal of the direction of time. This is, of course, the basis of kinematical relativity.

I have little space left for mentioning Bridgman's plea for the complete freedom of the scientist, of his defence of his "manifesto" proclaiming his refusal to show his apparatus or discuss his experiments with the citizens of totalitarian states, his animadversions on over-planning, his defence of an aristocracy of ability, and his insistence on intellectual integrity. Altogether, this is a thought-provoking work.

E. A. Milne.

Probability and the Weighing of Evidence. By I. J. Good. (London: Charles Griffin and Company. 1950. Pp. viii + 119. Price 16s.)

In his recent book Mr. Good deals with the subject of probability both from a mathematical and also from a philosophical point of view. This is not the place to discuss the mathematical part of his treatment, which in any case is not developed in any great detail; and it is sufficient to note that he adopts the sound procedure of presenting the formal calculus axiomatically and leaving the symbols to be interpreted in the more philosophical sections of his book.

The philosophical discussion is also somewhat summary, and Mr. Good often tantalizes the reader by introducing an idea that may well prove fruitful in the further development of the theory and then leaving it virtually undiscussed, with a simple acknowledgment that the arguments adduced are very tentative and are intended simply to indicate the kind of argument that would be appropriate in the context. This, however, is not wholly to be regarded as a failing, since in an exploratory inquiry it is often more valuable to suggest new ideas than to cramp one's thinking by striving for precise definition of concepts and complete cogency of argument at too early a stage. If, therefore, we are to profit from the study of this book, we must focus our attention on the positive suggestions which the author has to offer; and there are quite enough of these for the study to prove rewarding.

Probability is identified with degree of belief, where "belief" is used with some sort of logical connotation, having nothing to do with emotion. The precise meaning is unspecified, and Mr. Good evidently prefers, here as elsewhere, to accept for the time being a concept derived from common sense—with the intention, no doubt, of subjecting it to closer analysis when a *prima facie* case has been made out for its significance and usefulness. He insists (rightly, in the opinion of the reviewer) that every belief is partly subjective in that it is "relative to the state of mind ($\mathfrak{M}$) of the person who is doing the believing." This assertion says much more than that a probability always involves two propositions, the evidence H as well as the conclusion E; for the "state of mind" is no mere proposition, and it involves methodological principles and presuppositions, as well as memories that are vague and only partly conscious.

A person who thinks in terms of probabilities must begin with a stock of beliefs and comparisons between the strengths of these beliefs, and these basic

comparisons are the result of direct judgment. A set of such comparisons between beliefs is called a "body of beliefs" $\mathfrak{B}$, and when such a body exists the formal calculus of probabilities can be applied in order to arrive at new comparisons that are entailed by the original ones. In this way $\mathfrak{B}$ may be extended analytically, as well as being made more coherent and systematic, but nothing essentially new can be put into it by such means. If a given body of beliefs does not lead to contradictions when so worked up, it is called "reasonable"; and beliefs within such a reasonable body are called "probabilities."

Mr. Good's conception of probability, then, appears to amount to something like this. Suppose we take a trained scientist, say, or a man experienced in the conduct of practical affairs. His training or experience enables him to assess, with greater or less precision, the degree of belief which, in various cases, one proposition *H* justifies in another proposition *E*. By taking such direct assessments together with the formal relationships codified in the calculus of probabilities, and working up the whole into a coherent system, he arrives at a tolerably reliable and objective body of beliefs $\mathfrak{B}$, which constitutes his scientific or practical knowledge. As long as he is thorough and careful in his reasoning he may have fair confidence that his body of beliefs is in fact reasonable; but if a contradiction should reveal itself the body must be revised accordingly.

This picture of inductive reasoning does more justice to actual inference than do many existing accounts which, although more fully worked out, are nevertheless schematized to a dangerous extent; that is to say, the idealized model of inductive reasoning which is discussed is too remote from actuality for the discussion to have much bearing on real thinking. We may observe, however, that in the later portions of his book Mr. Good himself makes unwarranted use of schemata. His chapter on "Weighing Evidence," in particular, does scant justice to a highly complex subject. No doubt the weighing of evidence can in certain cases be reduced to the application of formal rules, but these cases are very special indeed. Quality control in factories is a case in point, since here the given situation is already very highly schematized—much as a test-tube experiment is schematized by comparison with the chemical processes that take place in nature. Again, low-grade thinking of various kinds may be amenable to Mr. Good's methods; but surely high-grade weighing of evidence demands exercise of judgment in the full sense. To mention only one point, the evidence itself may suggest new and unsuspected considerations which must then be taken into account in judging its weight.

To sum up. Mr. Good has given us a book for which we can be very grateful on account of the number of fresh ideas and points of view which he sets before us. His theory requires a great deal of elaboration before it can be convincing; but he is to be congratulated on putting forward ideas that are genuinely related to actual experience of reasoning, even though they are at present somewhat vague, instead of constructing a more highly developed theory that remains artificial and sterile.

G. T. KNEEBONE.

A History of Philosophy, Volume II, Mediaeval Philosophy Augustine to Scotus. By FREDERICK COPLESTON, S.J. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. 1950. Pp. x + 614. Price 25s.)

Father Copleston moves steadily forward on his ambitious enterprise. In the present instalment of his *History of Philosophy* he travels the long road that stretches from the early Apologists of Christianity to Duns Scotus. Further volumes are promised dealing with the philosophies of the fourteenth

century, of the Renaissance and of the modern period. In this second volume the author strides from peak to peak, moving swiftly over the lesser heights. Six chapters are given to St. Augustine, four to St. Bonaventura, ten to St. Thomas, six to Duns Scotus. This concentration on the great figures is commendable even if it results in scant treatment of many considerable teachers. And some interesting masters are not mentioned; Peter of Spain, for example. Before I turn to the story that Father Copleston tells I must express a word of praise for the handsome style in which the book is printed. I have noticed one mis-spelling, *Sickes* for *Sikes* in the bibliography at the end of the volume.

The first Part describes pre-medieval influences. A sketch of philosophical elements in the writings of the Fathers furnishes a preamble to the account of these influences. The sketch is deliberately slight; Clement of Alexandria especially receives bare attention. Gregory of Nyssa is accorded most honour as a philosopher. We pass quickly to St. Augustine whose cardinal ideas are clearly and succinctly set forth. The Neo-Platonic account of knowledge, the arguments for the existence of God, the theory of nature and mind, and the moral and political doctrine are skilfully summarized. The author acknowledges the imprecision of much of Augustine's thought and attributes it to his preoccupation with religious wisdom. It may also be the result of his rhetorical training, as M. Marrou has argued. In the account of the view of knowledge the distinctive analysis of sensation offered in *De Musica* seems insufficiently emphasized. Sensation, for Augustine, is an act of the soul performed when, in its vigilant supervision of the body, it observes some modification of the body's state. The position is one of the chief characteristics of the Augustinian school. The ontological interpretation of the Ideas, attributed to Augustine by Malebranche and Norris in the seventeenth century, is rightly rejected by Father Copleston, and he provides a balanced account of the doctrine of illumination. In the brief chapter on the arguments for God's existence and attributes he avoids discussion of the saint's utterances on Predestination which have been obstacles to many Christians since the year 427. Other points, the seminal reasons, the treatment of numbers and the doctrine of the soul are compactly presented. Where so much is pressed into a few chapters it is ungrateful to demand more, but I venture to think that mention might have been made of the remarkable discussion on Time in the *Confessions*. And Augustine's psychological explorations, such as the distinctions given in *De Trinitate*, are not recognized. We move to the Pseudo-Dionysius. The positive and negative paths to divine knowledge are well described, but surely some space might have been allowed to the influential picture of the celestial hierarchy. Boethius is given somewhat lean treatment. The author does justice to his work in transmitting part of Aristotle to the earlier Middle Ages but the Platonic teaching of the *Consolatio* is overlooked.

Part II opens with a useful survey of the Carolingian renaissance and proceeds to an excellent description of the philosophy of Erigena. Father Copleston is at pains to defend him from the charge of pantheism, and most recent historians would agree that the defence succeeds. Part III journeys rapidly through the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. It begins with the controversy over universals. The problem and the main positions are lucidly presented. Father Copleston well remarks that "nominalists" of this period, men such as Eric of Auxerre and Roscelin of Compiègne, may more suitably be classed as critics of extreme realism than nominalists. Was there any pure nominalist in the Middle Ages? It is to be doubted. With Abelard the author is summary. His moderate realism is touched on, but the bold arguments of the *Sic et Non* and the *Scito Teipsum* are ignored. The next section reviews the work of Anselm. The essential features of the *Monologium* and *Proslogium*

are picked out and the ontological argument is ceremoniously reported. The few words of criticism of the argument are not very clear. More attention might have been given to the *Dialogus De Veritate*. Passing over two interesting chapters on the schools of Chartres and St. Victor, and on the Manichees of this period, we reach with Part IV the Islamic and Jewish philosophy.

The decisive influence exercised by the theories of Avicenna upon scholastic thinking has now been recognized. There passes from him into the thirteenth century a series of capital tenets, the illumination of the mind by the active intellect, the relation of essence and existence, the material basis of individuation. Father Copleston records these doctrines. What he does not record is the special thesis of Avicenna that essence is indifferent to universality and particularity, a thesis that reappeared in Duns Scotus. The account of the work of the Commentator is very concise; the elaborate system of the universe is not given. It is easy, once more, to complain that the sweep and originality of Maimonides is not acknowledged in the section on Jewish philosophy.

Such protests may unfairly make demands beyond the scale that the author has imposed on his history. Yet the treatment of several impressive thinkers seems a little fragmentary. This Part ends with a chapter on the advance of Aristotelianism.

In Part V we step into the grand period. William of Auvergne is the first important master in whose writing the old tradition meets the new conceptions of Aristotle and the Arabians. He is given good measure. The variations of Robert Grosseteste on the theme of light are recorded; his remarkable explorations in mathematics and natural philosophy are not. Indeed the tale of the early scientific movement at Oxford is cut off, and the narrative turns to the great events in Paris. The work of Alexander of Hales provides the prelude to these developments. Bonaventura has been a matter of contention in recent discussion. Is it possible to regard him as a philosopher at all in the traditional sense? Did he not condemn the formal division between philosophy and theology? In the commentary on the Sentences he seems to decide each philosophical question by recourse to the Scriptures and the Fathers. Father Copleston nicely balances the exegesis of M. Gilson and the views of his eminent critics. The author persuasively shows how Bonaventura contributed to the debates on the kinds of matter, individuation, forms in man, *rationes seminales* and other philosophical questions. He also shows how the positions of Augustine are imposed upon the texts of Aristotle, how, for instance, illumination is laid upon abstraction and how all is ruled by the theology of the Word. By way of the eclectic and encyclopaedic Albert the Great we reach St. Thomas.

In an excellent chapter on the Thomist distinction between the provinces of philosophy and theology the author maintains with reason that the position does not differ fundamentally from the teaching of Augustine. He utters a rebuke to Thomists who approach modern philosophers with "*a priori* suspicion, reserve and even hostility." Scholastic conservatism is untrue to the philosophic spirit of Aquinas. He judiciously approaches the system through the hylomorphic principles of corporeal substances and expounds briefly the basic notions of matter and form, potentiality and act, individuation, existence and essence. The Five Proofs are seen in their proper context; they are not intended to satisy members of the Rationalist Association. Indeed the argument from contingency to a necessary being, which is the core of the five ways, receives now little approval. On another disputed point, one of the most difficult questions in St. Thomas, the doctrine of analogy, Father Copleston admits doubt. In the section on the metaphysics of creation he firmly brings out the fact that St. Thomas refused to allow that philosophy can prove that

creation of the world took place in time; the doctrine is known only through revelation. A lucid digest of the psychology follows, the doctrine of the one substantial form, of the faculties, the senses, and the will. There is an admirable outline of the elaborate analysis of the process of knowledge in the *Summa*. This raises the question whether on such premisses there can be metaphysical knowledge. In giving St. Thomas' answer the author reverts to the special issue of the knowledge of God *per remotionem*, instead of referring to the constitutive elements of beings, the causal relation and other principles. The chapters on the moral and political theories of Aquinas are valuable summaries. A discussion on the extent to which he adopted the philosophy of Aristotle is refreshing after so concentrated a review. Father Copleston points out how the theological beliefs of the great scholastic transmuted his Aristotelian principles, and he exposes certain latent tensions between the Christian faith and the Aristotelianism of Aquinas.

I cannot delay to remark on the skilful handling of Latin Averroism, Roger Bacon, the Franciscan thinkers, Giles of Rome, and Henry of Ghent. In approaching the work of Duns Scotus the unhappy historian is obliged to plunge into the battle over the authenticity of the texts. Father Copleston is fully alive to the dispute over the *Theoremata* and takes a hand himself in the controversy. He views Scotus as on the whole a master of the Franciscan tradition in philosophy; but he emphasizes the original notes of his thought, the criticism of natural theology, the voluntarism and the doctrine of the univocity of being. He effectively explains the sense in which Scotus denied theology to be a science and declared it to be a practical science. The doctrine of univocity is carefully expounded, and the theory of universals is defended against false charges. Indeed Father Copleston corrects a number of misconceptions that are visible in reputable text-books; for example, the misleading idea that Scotus taught that God's will is arbitrary. I am doubtful whether it is possible to consider satisfactorily the central question of the univocity of the concepts of being before dealing with the doctrine of the formal distinction, as the author does. The relation of the *passiones entis* to the unity of being cannot be described without using the principle of formal distinction. And I feel that not enough is made of the theory of *haecceitas*.

Medieval philosophy, as the author of this history says, can be treated from many points of view. But until the fourteenth century certain common assumptions derived from Greek thought and Christian doctrine are discernible. Father Copleston breaks off the story at the moment when radical criticisms of the age-long foundations began to be heard. He himself adheres strictly to his function as an historian; he does not stand back from the long procession of treatises in order to question the principles adopted from Christian Platonism and from Aristotle. If the student or teacher is seeking a faithful description in moderate compass of the course of the time-honoured arguments of the schools during the earlier and classic periods of the Middle Ages he will hardly find a better book in English than the present volume. No reader could fail to admire the ability with which the author has shaped his enormous material into a lucid and scholarly narrative.

M. H. Carré.

The Physical Basis of Mind. Compiled by Peter Laslett. (Blackwell. Pp.viii + 79. Price 5s.)

This collection of Third Programme broadcasts provides a useful introduction to modern theories about the way the nervous system works. It is introduced by Sir Charles Sherrington and he is followed by an extremely distinguished team of experts. Professor Le Gros Clark describes the anatomy of

the brain, its fibres and their pathways. Professor Adrian describes the electrical aspects of nerve conduction and briefly mentions the fashionable subject of electroencephalography. Professor Adrian's talk is supplemented by Professor Zuckermann who gives an account of the self-regulating control of cerebral processes, and manages to make the concept of "negative feed-back" —so essential to an understanding of much modern theory—intelligible. After him comes Dr. Slater with a more general talk on the way physiological changes affect consciousness, and Dr. Russell Brain, who draws attention to certain features of abstract thought and the understanding of speech which necessitate a patterned type of process in the nervous system, if what goes on there corresponds to the sorts of things we can do "with our minds." Finally Professor Penfield returns to the functional relation of parts of the brain. telling us that the "upper brain stem" plays the part of co-ordinating impulses—a role for which the cerebral cortex was previously cast.

Of course it must be emphasized that the essays are very short, and therefore statements are made with very little evidential support. When Dr. Brain, for instance, says: "There exists in the brain an electrical pattern for each word which is not identical with those underlying either its sound or its meaning," he does not tell us what kind of pattern these are, or whether any have actually been detected. Dr. Slater, too, if he had had more space, would surely have added a long footnote toning down his observation that: "Psychiatrists are convinced that we find a rather different run of personalities in men of long, thin, and narrow build, from the general type of personalities we find in short and tubby men." Is not "convinced" a rather strong word?

However, such are the limitations of little books, and in spite of them this one remains of value as a simple introduction, but does it answer the question, asked, as Sir Charles Sherrington reminds us, by Aristotle 2,000 years ago: "How is the mind attached to the body?" It is a question that puzzles all the physiologists, except perhaps Professor Zuckerman. It puzzles Lord Samuel, who comes to the microphone with two other philosophers to give their opinions. Needless to say it does not puzzle Professors Ayer and Ryle, who know the questions to most answers. After reading Professor Ayer's contribution the question need not puzzle anyone. The fault lies in the pictures behind it. The battle of the bridge between the two spheres is now off: there is no bridge, there are not two spheres. All we can say is that when we do the sorts of thing for which we use "mental" language there are neural things happening about which we know more and more. If anyone finds this debunking of an age-old problem a little bleak, let him read Professor Ryle's final word in this series, which will prepare him well for Professor Ryle's more celebrated work.

W. J. H. Sprott.

The English Utilitarians. By Leslie Stephen. (New York: Peter Smith. 1950. Price 15 dollars. First published: London: Duckworth & Co., 1900; reprinted by arrangement with Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd.)

Any reprint of Leslie Stephen's distinguished work would be of interest to readers of *Philosophy*. The method of reproduction in this case will demand the attention also of all who are interested in printing and book-production in general.

The English Utilitarians has been micro-offset, and the original three volumes, totalling over 1,200 pages, now appear as a single volume of about 330 pages—if we continue to use the word *page* in the sense applicable to the original edition. On each page of the reprint appear four pages of the original, set out as separate pages, with the original numbering, as they might be, for

instance, on an uncut sheet of page proofs. The effect is novel and illustrates, I fear, a failure to combine beauty with utility. Let us hope that neither the paging nor the price may be taken as the shape of things to come in book-production.

When bibliophiles have recovered from the shock, they will, I think, have to admit that the publisher's enterprise was a laudable one. He informs us in his *Note* that "micro-offset books are published in editions of from 100 to 250 copies. The titles issued in this series consist largely of reprints of out of print and scarce books required by those doing research work, and for which only an extremely limited sale is possible. Copies of the original edition have become practically unobtainable at any price; the occasional one that might prove available generally is priced far beyond the means of most libraries or scholars.

"It thus becomes necessary to employ some method of reproducing these books in very small editions and at a moderate price.

"Our method of reprinting such volumes hence makes available again titles that might otherwise prove unobtainable, perhaps for all time."

Moreover the type, though very small—smaller than the smallest type used in the notes in *Philosophy*[1]—is wonderfully clear, and even the tiny notes can be read without straining. The binding is strong and suited for library use, and the general *format* is pleasing.

I understand that the process used may be described as "micro-photographic lithography," but beyond that the experts whom I consulted would not go, except to tell me that such devices have already caused strikes among American printers.

To recall the work of Leslie Stephen is to open a window on the nineteenth century and to be reminded of some of its neglected splendours. Stephen's own biography is crowded with great names. Macaulay was a friend of the family. Stephen's first wife was a daughter of Thackeray. As editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, he met, among his contributors, R. L. Stevenson, Thomas Hardy and Henry James. For fifty years he moved at the centre of a brilliant circle and was probably better qualified than any other to write a ***nineteenth*** century sequel to his own *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. From such a comprehensive effort modesty restrained him, and he decided to concentrate on the "compact and energetic school of the English Utilitarians" of which he had been himself a disciple "during its last period."

The original edition was reviewed more adequately than my various limitations permit, for example by W. R. Sorley in *Mind, N.S.* vol. X, and by R. Latta in *The International Journal of Ethics*, vol. XII. I cannot improve on Sorley's general commendation:

"The work opens with an interesting discussion on the formation of philosophical opinion, followed by a series of chapters on the political, industrial and social conditions which determined the rise of the Utilitarians and gave them their problem. Of these chapters it is sufficient to say that they are worthy of the historian of *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. Mr. Stephen's knowledge of the literature of the period is probably unrivalled, and there must be few who can rival his knowledge of its social conditions. He has a true eye for the salient features of a social movement or of a literary work, and he has the art of making them live in the sight of his readers. Throughout the whole work, indeed, he shows this easy mastery of detail—he selects what is interesting and sums it up in an epigram."

Space will permit me only to remind readers of the general structure of the

[1] Except for certain specimen pages and the Index which reproduce the original type.

work and mention one or two points of critical interest. Briefly, the three volumes are focussed on Bentham, James Mill and John Stuart Mill respectively.

This method had advantages and disadvantages. To quote Sorley again: "It is not without some loss of historical accuracy that James Mill's work is thus separated from Bentham's and treated apart. . . . Bentham's long life did not admit of Mill becoming, in any effective sense, his successor."

A more serious criticism mentioned by Sorley which I should endorse is that the philosophical sources of Bentham's doctrine are inadequately investigated. Bentham was much more indebted to Locke and his successors—Hutcheson, Hume, Helvetius and Priestley—than Stephen recognized.

It is to be hoped that this publishing experiment, however anomalous it may seem to lovers of generous type and wide margins, will send many readers back to the study of Stephen's masterpieces, even though they should have to read them *micro-offset*. D. J. McCracken.

Elements of Analytic Philosophy. By Arthur Pap. (Macmillan. Pp. 514. Price 35s.)

Mr. Pap is one of those for whom "philosophy" means the analysis of certain important concepts, especially those fundamental to scientific thought. The aim of his book is "to illustrate the method of logical analysis by application to various topics." The topics cover a wide field: universals and particulars, *a priori* principles, perception, probability, causation, scientific method, meaning and truth, moral value. In dealing with them the author makes frequent use of the techniques of present-day formal logic. He is not putting forward original theories, or advocating the opinions of any one group of philosophical analysts, but presenting the view point of the modern analytical movement as a whole, and showing some of its important results. He claims that some familiar problems can be dissolved by semantic analysis—e.g. "The proposition 'There exists an external world' can be known with certainty by observing the way words are commonly used"; and similarly with the demand for a "justification" of induction, or the question "Can two people see the same colour?" But the most unpalatable paradoxes of logical positivism are repudiated: Mr. Pap holds that one can sometimes speak significantly about unobservable kinds of entities, rejects behaviouristic analyses of statements about minds, maintains that there are genuine problems, both philosophical and scientific, about the relation between minds and bodies, and is not prepared to deny that there are some synthetic *a priori* propositions. As to phenomenalism, he thinks that its acceptability "hinges upon the results of a careful analysis of that meaning of 'if-then' which is involved in subjunctive conditionals."

The book is effective in its main aim of illustrating the methods and assembling some important conclusions of modern analytical philosophy. Mr. Pap has a wide knowledge of the field he covers; he talks good sense and gives good reasons for his opinions, and his judgment is to be respected. This reviewer particularly appreciated the treatment of causation.

One slip seems worth pointing out. Mr. Pap, dealing with the principle of verifiability, considers the charge that according to that principle it is itself meaningless, and pleads in its defence the rule that no significant statement *can* make an assertion that is applicable to itself; but surely this does not dispose of the need to show in what way the verifiability-principle is meaningful.

The faults of the book are chiefly those of presentation. It is especially

intended for students beginning philosophy, and for this purpose it seems to me long and heavy. The topics follow a rather haphazard order (for instance, two discussions of phenomenalism are separated by 250 pages); and it is easy to lose one's way in the argument. I suspect that the use of the techniques of formal logic will sometimes confuse the reader as much as it enlightens him. The book lacks impetus, and may well leave the impression that philosophical analyses is no more than a tedious and unprofitable exercise.

There is a useful Glossary, with full explanations of the use of a large number of technical terms, mainly logical.

C. H. WHITELEY.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, N.S. Vol. XLIX. 1948–49. (London: Harrison & Sons, Ltd. Pp. 224. Price 30s.)

The papers included in the volume are:

I. C. A. Mace: *Presidential Address on Some Implications of Analytical Behaviourism* (pp. 16).

This theory regards statements about "mind" as statements about behaviour (acts, states, dispositions) of bodies, psychology being a biological science making use of introspection. The implications of the theory (i) are consistent with the distinctions between subject, object and act of classical psychology, (ii) encourage search for more precise psychological concepts which will, in fact, be helpful to all social sciences, including social psychology, and (iii) are not hostile to the existence of "spiritual" values.

II. J. A. Passmore: *Philosophy and Scientific Method* (pp. 16).

Methodology does not offer to protect us against risk of error. Problems of method arise in new studies (such as social sciences), and methodology, by reflection on established methods successfully employed in the natural sciences, may afford clues to new "prospective" sciences with regard to principles of procedure.

III. D. J. O'Connor: *Is there a Problem about Free Will?* (pp. 14).

What is primarily required is a set of clear and consistent linguistic rules for use of the term "free." When this requirement is satisfied any remaining problems will fall within the province of physiology.

IV. J. O. Wisdom: *Perception-Statements* (pp. 18).

Attempts to describe perceptual experience in experiential terms. Any *bona fide* perception-statement implies (*a*) seeing a percept, (*b*) remembering or anticipating other percepts with which it "coheres," (*c*) the ineluctable assumptions of (i) the "uniformity of nature" and (ii) that what is being perceived exists unperceived. This analysis probably covers also statements about other selves.

V. A. H. Basson: *The Problem of Substance* (pp. 8).

The problem is properly stated, not as that of the relation of substance and quality, but as that of the significant employment of substantives and adjectives in linguistic usage. It is argued that the distinction between the two terms is fundamental to language, and is therefore of metaphysical significance.

VI. D. J. McCracken: *Ethical Positivism* (pp. 18).

The fundamental ethical concept is "value," and there is a given intrinsic value, recognized *a priori*, namely the identification of man with his fellows. As both fact and value, this can be the basis of a genuinely positivist ethic. There are different degrees of self-identification (ranging from love to hatred). Since morality is possible only in this "public world," the principle permits the deduction of specific virtues such as truthfulness and promise-keeping.

VII. G. P. Meredith: *Revision of Spearman's Noëgenetic Principles* (pp. 24).

Spearman's factorial theory has attracted more attention than "noëgenesis" which he regarded as his main contribution to psychology. But restated and extended (*a*) to provide a biological setting for mental activity, and (*b*) to connect more closely with logic, "noëgenesis" is a fruitful concept. The paper restricts itself to a revised statement and proposed extension (*a*).

VIII. Ernest H. Hutten: *Semantics and Physics* (pp. 18).

Attention to progress in physical theory is the most profitable foundation for semantic studies. The history of physics shows increasingly precise "languages" being built upon each other with their ultimate basis in "natural language" in direct contact with ordinary experience. Becoming more formal as requirements of precise thought increase, the broad results of new theories can yet, for certain purposes, be "reduced" to the older ones. The study of scientific language throws light on the nature of language and thought in general, and is therefore important for logic and epistemology.

IX. J. D. Mabbott: *True and False in Morals* (pp. 18).

In the new subjectivism (as represented, e.g. in Stevenson) two things become clear: (*a*) the theory does not give a genuine analysis of the meaning of ethical statements; and (*b*) when it attempts to relate itself to ordinary moral judgments it re-introduces "objective" assumptions. It is therefore not helpful as a moral theory.

X. D. R. Cousin: *Propositions* (pp. 20).

As a basis for agreement on rules for the use of the word "proposition" it is suggested that a proposition must have a fourfold neutrality: (*a*) as between languages, (*b*) as between persons, (*c*) as between believing, doubting, etc., (*d*) as between times and places. What is required is an objective interpretation without implying any metaphysical mysteries. The most promising line would seem to be a behaviouristic interpretation, communication being a means whereby social groups interact appropriately or inappropriately with their environment.

XI. H. L. A. Hart: *The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights* (pp. 24).

We are "ascribing" not "describing" in all assertions of rights, duties and liabilities. Legal concepts such as "contract" and "*mens rea*" cannot and need not be precisely defined, since judgments on rights are not concerned with truth but with establishing obligations. Similarly, in imputing "responsibility" for action we are not concerned with causal truth but with measures to enforce a social code.

XII. Morris Ginsberg: *Basic Needs and Moral Ideals* (pp. 20).

There is a duality in moral experience. Out of basic needs (bodily, mental, social) arise ideals which in turn transform the needs, and ideals are themselves modified by attempts to make them effective. The task of ethics is to assist practical men to deeper knowledge of basic needs and to clarification of the emerging ideals, thus facilitating the appropriate practical adjustment of both.

(The papers cover so wide a field of special problems that it would be presumptuous to comment on all and invidious to draw particular attention to some. I have therefore restricted myself to the foregoing summaries; and, although even this limited task has been tough at times, it is hoped that the authors will not feel that the high degree of compression has been accompanied by avoidable distortion. This seems to me to be a good volume, the papers, on the whole, being of really good quality.)

W. D. LAMONT.

Essays in the History of Ideas. By ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY. (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore; London, Cumberlege. 1948. Pp. 354. Price 27s. 6d.

In this volume several papers by Professor Lovejoy, which have for the most part already appeared in various journals during the past twenty-five years, have been brought together at the invitation of his colleagues in the History of Ideas Club at Johns Hopkins University, with a preface by the author. A bibliography of his writings is appended.

The papers deal with topics which we may perhaps describe as situated on the border-line between the history of philosophy and the history of taste (in art, literature, gardening, architecture etc.), and every point is treated with remarkable thoroughness and command of detail. A theme with which several of them are concerned is the "imitation of nature" as an aesthetic principle and the "return to nature" as a maxim in moral philosophy. One essay is devoted to an analysis of the senses of "Nature as an Aesthetic norm," and another to "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," i.e. to the prevalence of a certain mode of philosophy simultaneously with the acceptance of certain standards in the arts. In other papers, Professor Lovejoy is concerned with the meaning or history of "romanticism"; he distinguishes various movements which have been called by that name, and takes part in a debate concerning the history of the German romantic movement. As a whole, the essays serve as a complement to a book published by the author in 1935 in collaboration with Professor G. Boas, on "Primitivism and related ideas in Antiquity"; and two pieces are included (on "The communism of St. Ambrose" and "Nature as Norm in Tertullian"), which were destined for a continuation of that work.

In his Preface, Professor Lovejoy indicates "some general or frequently recurrent phenomena in the history of ideas, of which the various essays may be regarded as offering particular illustrations." The first is *the presence and influence of the same presuppositions in very diverse provinces of thought and in different periods*. Thus, "the parallel of Deism and Classicism" shows clearly the prevalence of the same presuppositions and standards in different provinces, but in the same age—the eighteenth century; and, in a later essay, the same complex of ideas is traced in the work of a third-century Christian apologist, Tertullian. Secondly, *the role of semantic transitions and confusions, of shifts and of ambiguities in the meanings of terms, in the history of thought and of taste*. "The supreme example of this is, of course, to be seen in the most potent, pervasive and consistent of all catchwords, 'nature,' " and in the case of the

word "romanticism," we have to do with a confusion which has arisen not in the minds of artists and thinkers, but in those of historians and critics. Thirdly: *The internal tensions or waverings in the mind of almost every individual writer . . . arising from conflicting ideas, or incongruous propensities of feeling or taste.* This fact, according to Professor Lovejoy, whose judgment here is somewhat surprising, is often insufficiently realized by expositors, who tend to assume that their author's thinking, in general or at least on a particular question, is all-of-a-piece. (Surely scholars are, in approximately equal numbers, prone to this and to the opposite fault?)

The first paper ("The Historiography of Ideas," published in 1938) is concerned with the barriers created by academic specialization, and has the merit of suggesting a positive programme for their removal, instead of merely deploring the present state of affairs. At present, the history of ideas is the concern of several distinct types of student; the person whose study is most central is, for obvious reasons, the historian of philosophy. Little is to be expected from the method of collecting separate contributions from specialists unknown to each other; and, failing that true collaboration in which the experts bring their minds to bear upon a common problem, perhaps the best thing is for each researcher to shake off his inhibitions and pursue the idea in which he is interested beyond his own bounds, in defiance of any law of trespass. There will not, I imagine, be much disagreement with this diagnosis. It is obvious that many authors, of whom Plato is one, and Rousseau another, owing to a faulty academic tradition, are parcelled out among specialists, no one of whom obtains a view of the man as a whole; and if anyone questions the proposed remedy, it is for him to point out a better one. Whatever may be thought of this point, the value of the present collection of essays remains, and their republication is to be welcomed; many of them originally appeared in journals seldom thumbed by philosophers.

Some readers, on seeing the word "parallelism," may expect to find fanciful analogies between art, literature, politics, etc., but it is enough to read a few pages to be assured that this fear is, in the present instance, groundless. Professor Lovejoy is not only equipped with an astonishing fund of information; he is very skilful in drawing distinctions, and in formulating them with precision, without lapsing into anything like pedantry. To comment on each essay in detail would indeed be a lengthy task, and one which would require very comprehensive erudition. For myself, I must admit that I have had my attention drawn for the first time to such matters as the cult of Chinese gardening in this country, the meaning of the word Gothic in application to architecture, the influence of Schiller upon Schlegel and the part which each played in the genesis of German romanticism, etc. Concerning all this I was not merely ignorant, but scarcely even suspected the existence of the questions; and, now that I have the information, I find it illuminating. *A fortiori*, I am not competent to say how far Professor Lovejoy's expression of opinion on controversial points has been endorsed by others since the publication of the essays. But I will venture to comment upon the points raised in the second and third studies.

Dealing with "the supposed primitivism of Rousseau," Professor Lovejoy shows that in the *Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau distinguished *four* stages previous to the civil state; that only the first of these was termed by him the state of nature; and that there is nothing whatever to show that he idealized this state, if we overlook one or two expressions which refer to the superior strength and agility of primitive man. It is to the *third* stage of evolution that Rousseau, in this *Discourse*, looks back with a kind of regret, describing it as "*la véritable jeunesse du genre humain*" etc.; but it invariably gives rise, in

consequence of a "*funeste accident*," to a state in which *amour-propre* is the dominating motive, and competition and jealousy prevail to such an extent that men must rescue themselves by a social contract which deprives them of part of their liberty. It is in virtue of the description of this last pre-social stage that Rousseau's view of the state of nature has sometimes been compared to that of Hobbes.

In the ensuing essay, a curious historical problem is raised. Both Rousseau, in one of the notes *to* the *Discourse on Inequality*, and Lord Monboddo in his work on *The Origin and Progress of Language*, maintain that the orang-outang is a genuine wild man, not differing physically or in mental and emotional capacity from the human race. Privately, Monboddo seems to have gone further, maintaining that since some men have vestigial tails, monkeys also are a branch of the same family as ourselves. Professor Lovejoy points out that neither Rousseau nor Monboddo is a "primitivist"; it is true that they both use terms which look like a eulogy of the natural state, but what they are admiring is simply the physical fitness of our remote ancestors. In reality these two thinkers are pioneers of a way of thinking novel in their century—they are evolutionists; Monboddo "was one of the few men of his time who really had what may be called the genetic habit of mind. The Aristotelian distinction between the power of becoming anything, and actually *being* that thing, is fundamental to his whole doctrine." As to the question of priority between the two writers, Rousseau wrote earlier than Monboddo, who names him; but many similar passages may be due to the common influence of ancient authors; both were of course familiar with Seneca's XCth Letter, with the Epicurean account of primeval man, and so forth.

While agreeing with the main tenour of this exposition, I should have liked to see the contrast between Rousseau and Hobbes more clearly drawn; and I think Professor Lovejoy perhaps minimizes the problem of fitting on the *Discourse on Inequality* to the *Contrat Social*. (By the way, the phrase *funeste accident* requires some stronger translation than "unhappy chance." It means, surely, a disastrous or fatal chance. This would not weaken, but reinforce Professor Lovejoy's argument where he quotes these words.) It may be true that the concept of *amour-propre*, and the description of its effect upon men, are drawn from Hobbes. Still there is the difference that Rousseau contrasted it with a harmless urge to self-preservation, and Hobbes did not. And there is a more important difference than this. Hobbes supposes that men continue in society from the same motive which induced their predecessors to create it; Rousseau, with more imagination, allows for the fact that the mentality of men must necessarily be changed by the experience of society itself: society is *retained* because it gives man moral freedom, but it was not and could not have been created with this purpose in view. (No commentator or critic gives Rousseau credit for this distinction, and many of them obscure it by a mistranslation in C.S. I.6. Men know that they must find "a form of association which *shall defend* and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate; and whereby each man, though united to all, *shall obey* only himself and *remain* as free as before." These are subjunctives expressing the purpose of the primitive man, and the criticisms of Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, pp. 83–4, are therefore beside the point. Hegel, T. H. Green, Carritt and Joad have all read these subjunctives as indicative.)

But the tone of the *C.S.* is altogether more optimistic than that of the *Discourse*; and surely it is not from the last of the four stages depicted in the *Discourse*, rendered hideous by mutual jealousy, that men are represented as passing into the civil state. The "obstacles to men's survival in the State

of nature," of which we hear in C.S. I.6, appear to me to be physical hindrances, not those which result from suicidal competition. If so, there is yet another difference between Rousseau's account of the genesis of civil society and that of Hobbes.

Professor Lovejoy's studies are an invaluable guide to the whole bewildering mass of ideas which, since ancient times, have been evoked by the word *nature*. He says that there are sixty-odd senses of this term, and having seen his skill in distinction, I am prepared to believe him. At the end, I found myself in possession of a rare "idea"—namely, the wish that the book had been longer.

D. J. ALLAN.

The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism. By ELIE HALÉVY. Translated by Mary Morris. (Faber and Faber. 1949. Pp. xvii + 554. Price 25s. net.)

La Formation du Radicalism Philosophique was published in 1918; Mrs. Morris's excellent translation first appeared in 1928; with a new edition in 1934. The publishers have now reprinted the edition of 1934.

The author, who died in 1937, brought to the writing of this history of philosophy the talents of a great historian and of a great philosophical critic. He deploys a vast array of facts in a lively and memorable manner and conveys a vivid impression of the principal characters; he also grasps the nature of the problems they were trying to solve and the strengths and weaknesses of the solutions proposed. However, the book is so well known and so generally admired that it would be superfluous to describe or to praise it further. If there is any part of it which disappoints on re-reading, it is the estimate of the younger Mill. Halévy evidently felt that John Stuart Mill lacked the disciplined mind and clarity of the early Radicals; and that the qualifications which he tried to make in Utilitarianism, only served to re-introduce "that sentimentalism which the orthodox Benthamites had defined only in order to condemn." This is a hard saying. No doubt his ethical writings are full of confusions and hesitations. But this is partly because he sees so many sides to questions that had once looked simple; and has moral misgivings over the possible inward consequences of the pure Benthamite doctrine. His mind is both sensitive and suggestive and what he wrote still seems alive.

However, Halévy treats of J. S. Mill only incidentally. The Philosophical Radical movement began to break up even before the death of James Mill; and his son's attempt to broaden it into "a Utilitarianism of the whole of human nature" was altogether unsuccessful. In his diary of 1854, John Mill recorded the fact that complete oblivion had overcome the name of James Mill. But if the movement came to an end, the temper and point of view of the Benthamites continued to influence ever-widening circles. And for this, the writings of J. S. Mill were very largely responsible. Halévy had something more to say of this later phase in the posthumous volume of his history, *The Age of Peel and Cobden*, of which an English translation was published in 1947.

K. W. BRITTON.

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy. Translated and edited by Lewis White Beck. (University of Chicago Press. 1949. Pp. xv + 370.)

This new translation covers a good deal of the same ground as the translation by T. K. Abbott, usually referred to as *Kant's Theory of Ethics*. What is common to both versions is the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, together with the short essay *On a Supposed Right to Lie from Motives of Benevolence*. Professor Beck does not give us, as

Abbott did, the first section of *Religion with the Bounds of Mere Reason:* and his extracts from the *Metaphysic of Morals* are different and shorter. On the other hand, he gives us, as Abbott did not, *An Inquiry into the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals;* the well-known and difficult essay *On Eternal Peace;* and two short articles little read in England, the first entitled *What is Enlightenment?* and the second *What is Orientation in Thinking?* As can be seen at once, this is a vast undertaking. It is supplemented by an introduction, by bibliographical notes both in the introduction and in an appendix, and finally by an index.

When we are given so much, it would be absurd to complain that we are not given more; but it is to be hoped that Professor Beck or someone else may one day give us the second volume which is still necessary if English readers are to appreciate Kant's moral philosophy on its more human side, and particularly in its application to the political and moral problems of ordinary life. This comes out in the shorter and semi-popular articles of which Professor Beck has given us a sample; for a fuller understanding we require also the various essays on history, and especially the discussion on the relation of theory to practice. Above all there is needed a readable version of the *Metaphysic of Morals* itself, to which Professor Beck, like many others, seems to assign less importance than it deserves.

The translation of Abbott, in spite of its considerable merits, not only suffers from occasional obscurities and indeed errors, but is written throughout in an idiom no longer in common use. Professor Beck has thus rendered a valuable service even where the two translations coincide. His version is readable and scholarly throughout, and one cannot but be grateful for the zeal and industry which has sustained him in so protracted and difficult a task. No translation can be a substitute for a study of the language used by Kant himself, but those who read German only imperfectly can use Professor Beck's work in the assurance that they have in him a reliable guide.

It is a little more difficult to speak on questions of style. Kant's own style is admittedly not easy, but this is mainly because he is like a juggler who keeps so many balls moving through the air that it is hard to see precisely what is happening. Some translations, on the other hand, give the impression that he was a fumbler, unable to say what he meant without awkwardness. Professor Beck does not always succeed in avoiding this—perhaps in a work of such an extent it is unreasonable to expect that he should. Take, for example, such sentences as the following, from the early part of the *Groundwork*. "I immediately see that I could will the lie but not a universal law to lie." "Innocence is indeed a glorious thing, but, on the other hand, it is very sad that it cannot well maintain itself, being easily led astray." "The word 'prudence' may be taken in two senses, and it may bear the name of prudence with reference to things of the world and private prudence." Sentences like these are neither inaccurate nor unintelligible, but they are unnecessarily clumsy. Abbott often shows a similar clumsiness, but in this respect he should be taken as a warning, not as a model. And why should he be followed—to mention one very small point—in imputing to Kant the extraordinary belief that a jewel can "sparkle with its own light"?

Professor Beck's bibliographical notes and his short introduction are admirable for their purpose. A fair attempt is made to trace Kant's ethical development and the relation of his ethics to the rest of his philosophy. It would be unreasonable to expect more. Some of the details, on the other hand, are open to question. Thus the complaint that Kant fails in his mature philosophy to consider "the empirical variety of the moral phenomenon" seems to me to spring from an unjustified neglect of the *Metaphysic of Morals.*

As a matter of exposition, a synthetic proposition for Kant is not one which goes "beyond the subject"—if it did so, it would be false—but one which goes beyond the *subject-concept*. Nor does it seem to me true to say that "before Kant," a priori synthetic judgment "would have been considered a *contradictio in adjecto*." If we set aside the verbal objection that this terminology was unknown before Kant himself, what is said may perhaps be true of Hume; but of other philosophers it would be more correct to say that they were continually making synthetic a priori judgments without being aware of what they were doing or of the need for justifying their procedure.

The cost of this book may be a serious obstacle to English students—I gather that at one time it was priced at 27s. 6d., but that the price has subsequently been raised, presumably because of devaluation. I can only say that those who fail to consult it will suffer a serious loss. Whatever its price, it ought to be in every university and college library. H. J. PATON.

The Proper Study of Mankind. By STUART CHASE. (London: Phoenix House. 1950. Pp. 288. Price 16s. net.)

Like Mr. Chase's previous writings, this book is very much a tract for the times; and as such it is addressed to the general reader rather than to the student of philosophy. But the student of philosophy cannot be indifferent to its message, which is that the only possible cure for the troubles of the world is to be found in the serious development and application of the social sciences; and he will find much to interest him in the way in which this message is imparted. Even if it does not strike him as particularly new, he will welcome the obvious seriousness and sincerity with which it is argued and the lively and readable accounts of some recent achievements of the social sciences in the U.S.A., especially in wartime, with which it is supported and illustrated. And he will have no doubt whatever that Mr. Chase's heart is very much in the right place.

At the same time he is likely to feel that seriousness and sincerity and readability, not to mention having one's heart in the right place and the numerous other good qualities which the book undoubtedly possesses, are not enough. And this feeling is likely to arise with special intensity in connection with the treatment (or lack of treatment) of the questions which are usually taken to be his special province. For example, the account of scientific method, even if not actually misleading, is entirely on a popular level. And there is no serious attempt to consider how the social sciences differ from the natural sciences, either in their methods or in the ways in which they can be used as instruments of power by the individuals or groups which practice or control them. Even from the point of view of the general reader, these are surely serious drawbacks. It may be unfair to compare the book, as a reviewer in another place has compared it, to a science article in the *Reader's Digest*; but it certainly gives the impression that the social sciences are much easier to understand, and to put into practice, than they are ever likely to be.

O. DE SELINCOURT.

Gottlob Frege: The Foundations of Arithmetic (*Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*). Translation by J. L. Austin. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1950. Pp. 132 (xii + 119). Price 16s.)

The name of Frege has become one of the most honoured in the history of mathematics. But the history of mathematics contains not a few tragedies. Frege's story is doubly tragic: not only did his work gain no adequate

recognition by his contemporaries, but also he appeared to himself, in his own words, "to have the foundation collapse just as the work is completed."

Nevertheless the importance of the work was soon recognized by Frege's immediate successors, notably by David Hilbert and Bertrand Russell. Indeed, the latter freely admitted that he found Frege to have anticipated some of his leading ideas almost twenty years earlier.

As E. T. Bell has written, "The problems of the nineteenth century met those of the twentieth in the extraordinarily subtle mind of F. L. G. Frege" (*Development of Mathematics* (1945), p. 280). Stated briefly, the nineteenth century had witnessed the reduction of all mathematical analysis to *arithmetic*, i.e. everything in the subject was placed upon the foundation of the "natural numbers." This was the tremendous achievement, above all, of Cantor, Dedekind, and Weierstrass. There remained, however, the most fundamental problem of all: to define number itself.

It was to this problem that Frege addressed himself. This brings us to the book under review and also explains the significance of its title. Actually, the sub-title is "A logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number." He advances in this book a first form of his famous definition which is usually stated as "the cardinal number of a given class is the class of all classes similar to the given class." Though the form in which it is here presented (p. 79) is decidedly different in appearance, I think that it can be recognized as effectively equivalent to this statement.

This book was first published in 1884 and was followed by two others on the same subject in 1893 and 1903. But, about 1902, mathematicians began to be troubled by the paradoxes arising from the concept of a class of *all* classes (of some particular sort). It was the most notorious of these paradoxes, concerning the class of all classes that are not members of themselves, which Bertrand Russell proposed to Frege, that so disheartened Frege about the value of his own work.

Yet it was, of course, precisely such work that gave these paradoxes their importance. And it was these paradoxes that stimulated the tremendous developments in mathematical philosophy during the present century. Thus we see the justification for Bell's remark concerning Frege's position as the meeting-place of the problems of the two centuries.

Not far short of half the book is devoted to a severely critical account of previous thought on the subject. The style is, in places, sardonic. While extraordinarily clear and penetrating this part of the work may in some degree account for the fact that the value of the constructive part was not more quickly recognized. For, long before one has finished reading it, one begins to wonder whether the author is in fact going to reach anything more constructive.

The central feature of the book is the development of the definition of number already mentioned. There can be no doubt about the greatness of this work. It is, of course, intrinsically the most difficult part of the book. Apart from the difficulty of the subject itself, its presentation is also a matter of considerable difficulty; it must be confessed that this part of the work is not easy reading.

There follows a section giving a series of applications of the definition to produce the sequence of individual natural numbers. By contrast with the earlier part of the book, this part is somewhat sketchy. A short section then deals with infinite numbers and is, naturally, closely related to Cantor's treatment of "transfinite numbers." Finally, there is a brief discussion of other number-systems (e.g. complex numbers) and a critique of the formalist theory of these systems.

The translator and the publisher have done a real service to mathematics and philosophy in bringing out this edition of Frege's book. The German text is reproduced in its original pagination with the English translation opposite each page. While Frege's ideas can, of course, be expounded in English, it by no means follows that this can be achieved by a direct translation. Skilful as Mr. Austin's translation most emphatically is, we must be additionally grateful to him for making the German text available at the same time.

W. H. McCrea.

The Philosophy of Thorstein Veblen. By Stanley Matthew Daugert. (New York: King's Crown Press; London: G. Cumberlege. 1950. Pp. 134. Price 18s.)

Veblen is chiefly known for his writings on economics, and particularly for his *Theory of the Leisure Class*. Dr. Daugert claims, however, that "there remain in his writings certain assumptions, norms, themes, and inquiries predominantly philosophical," and he has therefore tried to exhibit Veblen's "philosophy" in as coherent a form as he can. This is not an easy task, since Veblen only revealed his basic philosophical assumptions in a fragmentary manner; and Dr. Daugert is well aware of the difficulties involved in making coherent what was never coherent in the original.

It appears that Veblen was mainly influenced by such diverse writers as Kant (*Critique of Judgment*), Spencer, and the American pragmatists—Peirce, James, and Dewey; but he was, understandably enough, unable to reconcile the conflicting views he embraced and failed therefore to achieve a satisfactory synthesis. He implicitly accepted pragmatism, but openly attacked it; he wrote a book entitled *The Instinct of Workmanship*, but was apparently convinced, even during its composition, that no such "instinct" existed. Dr. Daugert writes well and has done the best he can with rather refractory material; but one can hardly escape the conclusion that he has presented us, not with a philosophy, but with a series of principles and leading ideas, often brilliant, sometimes paradoxical, invariably suggestive, but mainly of interest to students of economics and psychology. It is possible that those who are interested in philosophy will feel, as they put this book down, that Dr. Daugert's undoubted talents might have been better employed.

J. Hartland-Swann.

A Study of Hegel's Logic. By G. R. G. Mure. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1950. Pp. x + 376. Price 30s.)

Hegel took a certain pride in the high level of abstraction which he achieved in his *Logic*, and those of us who breathe less easily in the rarefied atmosphere which he found congenial are often unable to follow the progress of his argument or even to grasp the significance of individual categories. Mr. Mure here comes to our aid by expounding the whole of the *Logic* from Pure Being to Absolute Idea. The *Science of Logic* is occasionally drawn upon to modify and supplement the *Encyclopaedia Logic* which is taken, in the main, as the basic text. To logical positivists, I am afraid, this exposition will be meaningless nonsense, though they will have to concede that it is the "right nonsense"; but students of Hegel will find it the best guide to the *Logic* which has yet appeared, best because it is the most detailed, the most searching, the most scholarly, the truest to the spirit of Hegel.

Anyone who approaches the *Logic* for the first time is confronted by a more fundamental difficulty than that of following Hegel's argument in detail, the

difficulty of discovering, or deciding, what it is that Hegel is trying to do, or what main problems he is trying to solve. Misled by some of Hegel's assertions (e.g. that Logic is the realm of Pure Thought, or is mind thinking its own essence) a reader may suppose that Hegel is trying to develop a system of *a priori* knowledge out of pure self-consciousness. He may then concede that the first triad (Being, Not-Being, Becoming) conforms to this programme, but still regard the remainder of the *Logic* as a vain attempt to pack into what is supposed to be an *a priori* system the whole realms of nature and mind; and he may support his case by comparing the way in which the *Phenomenology* begins as a study of the advance from feeling through sense-perception and discursive thinking to absolute knowledge and ends as a conspectus of all time and all existence. More sympathetic readers have suspected that something must have gone wrong with Hegel's reasoning, if not at the close of the first triad, then at some later stage, because they refuse to swallow Mechanism or Chemism as self-definitions of God or Absolute Spirit.

If Hegel's enterprise be properly understood, however, the inclusion of these offending categories becomes more defensible; and the most plausible defence which I have so far encountered is the one which Mr. Mure erects on the exposition which he gave of the ground-plan of the Logic and its essential problem in his *Introduction to Hegel* (published in 1939 and treated somewhat cavalierly by certain impercipient reviewers). A knowledge of the *Introduction* is constantly presupposed in the *Study*, and the two books are really volumes one and two of the same work. A reader of the second must have the first constantly at hand, and a reader of the first will remain dissatisfied until he studies the second.

Hegel prefaced one of his early drafts of the *Logic* with a short description of what he was then attempting to accomplish: "The subject-matter of philosophy is infinite knowing, or the knowing of the Absolute. Over against this knowing there is finite knowing, or reflection. But the two are not absolutely opposed. . . . In philosophy the forms of finite knowing are absorbed, but their finitude is annihilated through their being related to one another. Hence the aim of a true logic is to array the forms of finitude, not by scraping them together empirically, but as they proceed out of Reason itself (although, robbed of Reason by the Understanding, they first appear only in their finitude). It must then be shown how the Understanding strives to imitate Reason, though it cannot progress beyond a merely formal identity. Finally the forms of the Understanding must be sublated by Reason and it must be shown what significance and worth these finite forms of knowing have for Reason."

Although this programme (which clearly has its roots in Plato's *Republic*, VI and VII) was later expanded and modified, Hegel's purpose remained essentially unchanged. Mind thinks in certain ways; but it can also reflect on the ways in which it thinks. Self-consciousness is self-critical and therefore self-transcending; to criticize one's achievement is already to have lifted oneself to a level above that achievement. Not contented with the type of thinking implicit in sense-awareness, mind has developed the more explicit type manifest in natural science, and by reflecting thereon has risen higher still to the Reason explicit in philosophy. Hegel came to regard this process as explicable only if Reason is immanent in the first dawning of sense-perception (and indeed earlier) and if the stages through which it passes in its self-constitutive progress are, however unsatisfactory in themselves, preserved in its maturity as part and parcel of its content. The categories of Hegel's logic are thus the distilled essence of the mode of thinking, and of what is thought, in every stage of reason's progressive and dialectical development. "The system

of logic is a realm of shadows, a world of simple essentialities freed from all concretion of sense."

Those to whom a logic constructed on this principle seems not unreasonable may yet think that there are certain limitations to the self-criticism of mind. Even if they do not go so far as to hold that the individual mind can never escape from an ideological conditioning, they may still believe that, on the human plane, the self-knowledge of mind can never yield the "absolute truth" which Hegel claimed in his *Logic*, but can only approach it asymptotically. Hegel's belief that the individual human mind is self-transcending only because Absolute Mind is immanent within it may be plausible; but although the *Logic* is the product of Hegel's thinking, he seems to have held that in thinking it he was not elaborating thoughts of his own but was entering into the thinking of the Absolute; the mind which comes to full consciousness of itself in the *Logic*, and which is self-constitutive throughout the dialectical development of its categories, is Absolute Mind. Hegel has heeded Aristotle's injunction that man ought not to confine himself to thinking of mortal things but should so far as possible put off mortality; only he has forgotten the qualification "so far as possible." In claiming that his Logic affords "Absolute Truth" he claims two things: first, that the Logic is God's thinking, and secondly, that the mind of man is not merely self-critical and self-transcendent but is capable of thinking God's thoughts because it is at, or can reach, the point beyond which self-transcendence can go no further since perfection and Absolute Truth have been attained. This impiety becomes explicit when Hegel tells us that the content of his Logic "shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit."

This general criticism has implications which Mr. Mure elaborates and argues with great power, partly in his introductory chapter on *Language and Hegel's Logic* and chiefly in the closing chapters which show how in human experience space and time and the gulf between the empirical and the *a priori* always persist and how for that reason the scope of a dialectical philosophy (though still wide) is narrower than Hegel supposed. As Mr. Mure knows, Hegel is his own critic, for he was aware that a philosophy is the child of its own time, and if while he was writing his Logic he often forgot this, he nevertheless did say there (as it were in confirmation of Mr. Mure's criticism) that the value of Logic only receives due appreciation when it is seen to result from the experience gained in the particular sciences. If that be so, Logic can never afford absolute truth because it must always be revised as the experience gained in empirical studies changes; it can never be wholly *a priori*, it must be empirical and, to that extent, tainted with contingency. Again, Mr. Mure shows how Hegel's own theory of language inevitably entails the consequence that even philosophical thinking is always an incomplete synthesis of language and thought, so that the problem of expression is not solved in the Logic; but when he goes so far as to say that there is no suggestion in Hegel that the linguistic expression of the logician's thought presents any special difficulty, he makes me wonder whether, in the closing pages of the preface to the second edition of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel does not betray at least an inkling of the difficulty: "The development of thought in its necessity," he says, "should be of all topics the one most capable of precise and immanently plastic expression, but this abstract perfection of expression must in the main be renounced." It is true that the reason for this renunciation is supposed to be the shortcomings of Hegel's readers, rather than his own, but it is clear that the thinking of the Infinite, on Hegel's programme, could be conducted only in the Infinite's own language, in which thought and its expression might be supposed to coincide, and not in any human tongue.

Alike as expositor and critic, Mr. Mure puts all Hegelian scholars deeply in his debt. As one of them I can but salute his book as the work of a master. He has achieved for the work of Hegel's maturity what Monsieur Jean Hyppolite has done for the *Phenomenology*; if Hegel himself had read their books, he might have thought that at last he was beginning to be understood. It must be added, however, that Mr. Mure's exposition is "designed to assist the average philosophical student," and I have grave doubts whether this design has been carried out successfully. The style in which Mr. Mure writes is perhaps intelligible only to those whose education in idealism enables them to understand its idiom (although at times even the *cognoscenti* will find it tantalizingly terse); but to the average philosophical student of today it must often seem almost as forbidding as Hegel's own. In any case, the argument is difficult, and this is not an easy book for anyone to read, no matter how much he knows about Hegel already; a beginner in *Hegeliana* may find it very hard indeed, and I suspect that his *initial* requirements may still be best met by Hibben or Noël.

Finally, as a member of Chandler's college, I must record my surprise that the Clarendon Press reader has allowed Mr. Mure to persist in his occasionally capricious Greek accentuation. T. M. Knox.

An Introduction to Metaphysics. By C. H. Whiteley. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1950. Pp. xiii + 174. Price 8s. 6d.)

Mr. Whiteley believes that a book intended, as his is, for those without much experience in philosophy "should deal principally with problems which seem to the general reader worthy of serious study rather than with those more technical problems in logic and theory of knowledge which are apt to appear trivial until one understands their implications." The intelligent man in the street, he says, turns to philosophy in the hope of learning about the nature of ultimate reality or the meaning of life. Mr. Whiteley accordingly takes as the main topic of his book, not indeed the question "What is the meaning of life?", but an examination of the belief which underlies this question, the belief namely that life can be interpreted as the result of a purpose or design.

In the first part of the book the materialist philosophy which is in direct conflict with this belief is expounded and discussed. According to materialism the world is a unity of material; the existence of minds and conscious purposes is not denied, but it is held that these are merely epiphenomenal, having no influence on the course of events; the only adequate explanation of anything is one in terms of causal laws. Mr. Whiteley examines Berkeley's criticism of materialism and of Locke's representative theory of perception and gives a critical account of the phenomenalist analysis of the notion of a material thing. The conclusion is reached that matter can have only the formal properties of being at a certain place at a certain time and of having certain effects. Since nothing can have these properties and no others, materialism cannot be a complete philosophy. Mr. Whiteley goes on to consider what grounds there may be for the belief that there is a purpose in nature. Since the concept of a superhuman purpose may be identified with the concept of God, this is equivalent to asking whether God exists; accordingly chapters 9 to 12 deal, broadly speaking, with the arguments for the existence of God. The whole discussion is summed up in the concluding chapter.

As this bald summary may indicate the beginner is introduced to philosophy by means of a connected argument dealing with a wider range of problems than has been found in some recent introductions. Despite its scope the book

is not superficial. The main arguments for and against each of the theories discussed are fairly stated, and Mr. Whiteley is to be admired for the degree of thoroughness with which he has succeeded in treating each problem at so comparatively short a length. He is at his best perhaps in the last part of the book; his discussion of the argument from design and the theory of natural selection is interesting and impressive, and here as well as in his account of materialism he makes skilful use of an apparently considerable knowledge of the results of scientific inquiry. The problem of knowledge, though it does not dominate the book, is not neglected, and the more discerning beginner may be led to perceive that discussions in theory of knowledge and in logic are not without a bearing on the larger questions in which, as Mr. Whiteley correctly claims, his initial interest usually lies. The language is unpretentious and, in the main, non-technical, and from the general tone of the book the layman should form the desirable impression that what is expected in philosophy is not rhetoric but calm and reasoned argument.

There are, however, certain faults of a kind which is regrettably common in introductions and these, in my opinion, detract considerably from the value which the book might otherwise have had. In the history of philosophy each theory put forward has involved the assertion of a number of different propositions which may be related to one another in various ways, by necessary connection, by probability or by mere compatibility—to take only the case of a theory which is tolerably self-consistent. Mr. Whiteley does not always succeed in making clear how and why he thinks the different elements in a theory are related to one another. As a result, the reader new to philosophy may wrongly assume in some cases that the relation intended is one of logical necessity and be needlessly perplexed by finding himself unable to perceive something which the author did not mean him to look for. This sort of defect seems to me to be exemplified in Mr. Whiteley's account of materialism to which I shall refer later. Again, I found that, at any rate on a first reading, the precise point at issue between opposing theories (e.g. epiphenomenalism and the alternatives to it) was apt to be slightly blurred; I think that this was due partly at least to the fact that Mr. Whiteley is weak in the art of light and shade: he does not always distinguish with sufficient emphasis between the important and the unimportant elements in the theories which he discusses.

We now come to the account of materialism. An unwary reader may be puzzled by the fact that materialism, which has been dismissed, he might have thought finally, in chapter 7, as not being a complete philosophy, is back again in the fight in chapter 9. The explanation appears to be this. Materialism as expounded in chapter 2 involves two elements. The first is the view that everything consists of matter; let us call this "corporealism" (a word which Mr. Whiteley does not use). The second is the view that the only adequate explanation of anything is one in terms of causal laws; this is determinism. What is dismissed in chapter 7 is corporealism; what is still under discussion later on is determinism. Chapter 2 throws some light, but not in my opinion enough, on the ways in which these two elements in materialism are related to one another. Mr. Whiteley's view is that if corporealism is true so is determinism, but it is not clear whether he thinks it would be absurd or merely paradoxical to accept the former and reject the latter, and whatever his view is his argument in support of it is not expressed very lucidly. The main defect of the exposition however is a failure to say whether or not determinism implies corporealism, and the danger that the reader may make the wrong assumption about this and have difficulty in following the main course of the argument at a later stage is not lessened by the fact that

Mr. Whiteley uses the term "materialism" in three different senses; sometimes it means what I have called "corporealism," sometimes determinism, and sometimes the combination of the two.

In addition to a table of contents and an index the book contains a glossary of philosophical terms and several short but useful lists of suggestions for further reading.

J. A. Faris.

The Works of George Berkeley. Vol. III. Edited by T. E. Jessop. (Nelson. 1950. Price 30s. net.)

The two volumes of this definitive edition of Berkeley which have already appeared contain the main philosophical writings, i.e. up to and including the *Three Dialogues*. In his introduction to Vol. III, which consists of the seven *Alciphron* dialogues, Professor Jessop therefore wisely makes no great philosophical claims on its behalf, but concentrates on its interest as a Christian apologia and on its literary merits in the dialogue form. Given Berkeley's object of opposing to the deists a defence of Christian doctrine that would be appropriate to the attitude of his day, there would be little relevance in the philosophy of the *Principles*; and the passages of epistemological interest to a modern reader are correspondingly few.

The discussion in Dialogue IV of the visual language of God does in fact lead up to the suggestion that there is a fundamentally different relation between sign and signified in the case of a descriptive statement and what it describes on the one hand, and on the other hand in the case of a natural event and what may be inferred from it as cause, effect, or concomitant. But Berkeley does not seem to have grasped the importance of the distinction, for it is put into the mouth of his opponent Alciphron, who drops it at once at the first huff from Euphranor.

The better known Dialogue VII contains a much more detailed statement of Berkeley's theory of meaning than is provided by the few hints in the *Principles*, and probably deserves in our semantic century a fuller study than it has yet received. His insistence that the descriptive use of words is not their only or even their primary function went too long unconsidered. That he did not advance it far himself may be, at least in part, due to his having confused in his illustrations the operational use of words (as in mathematics) with a fuzzily descriptive use (as in matters of faith). Belief in the result of a calculation in which $\sqrt{-1}$ has been employed, and belief in the doctrine of redemption may equally influence conduct; but that is not to say that the language of belief functions in the same way in both cases.

The editor has done his work carefully and unobtrusively, confining his own appearance to a short introduction and occasional footnotes. The text followed is that of 1752, with all variant readings of the two 1732 editions noted in an *apparatus criticus*. Professor Jessop suggests that Berkeley's omission from his last edition of the original §§ 5–7 of Dialogue VII attacking abstract ideas makes "an artistic improvement, for the three sections must have appeared to most readers to be an unnecessary digression." This is probably right, although why it is right is left unclear. A plausible explanation might be that Berkeley, having to a certain degree anticipated Professor Ryle in arguing that intelligence in use of language is not to be explained in terms of concurrent (or precurrent) sequences of private experience, has no need here to bother with belabouring abstract ideas.

I have not ferreted out misprints, but have noticed obvious errors in the following places: p. 13, l. 8; p. 165, l. 20; p. 305, l. 6; p. 308, l. 19.

A. D. Woozley.

PHILOSOPHY

Theory of Knowledge. By A. D. Woozley. (Hutchinson's University Library. 1949. Pp. 196.)

This volume forms part of a series edited by an Oxford Professor and written (or to be written) by a number of his Oxford colleagues. The justification of such series of books is a matter for the publishers. What each writer hopes, no doubt, is that his book will provide its own justification, and in a measure this is true of Mr. Woozley's. He has written what he set out to write —a book that will be of use to beginners in Philosophy, and of value, therefore, to teachers of Philosophy at its most elementary stage.

The author tries to exhibit ways of philosophical thinking and discussion (even though—to the more radical of his Oxford colleagues—they may seem to be out-moded) rather than to arrive at definite conclusions. What in fact, he exhibits is that way of thinking about truth and knowledge, perception and memory, universals and particulars, which derives from Bertrand Russell and was pursued by Ramsey and others. Mr. Woozley, is of course, quite competent to discuss these questions in a more definitely linguistic way: but he has evidently decided that the time has not yet come to write an elementary book in the newer vein. Perhaps he is right; but it would be interesting to see it attempted. As it is, he is inclined to bring newer methods to bear, to help him out of the difficulties into which the older discussions always led. By doing so he may sometimes seem to be dodging the real problem; what he ought to do more clearly and explicitly, is to go back to "the real problem" and restate it as a question about language. Not, in the old narrow way, as a question about pen-and-paper syntax only; but as a question about communication viewed in many aspects, viewed dramatically. Mr. Woozley gives hints of all this in his discussion of the difference between "Hitler is Dead," "It is true that Hitler is Dead," and "I know that Hitler is Dead."

The main argument about belief is that there *cannot* be unitary "thought-objects," with which we are acquainted, and which have or do not have, a certain relation to the facts; that judgment is a multiple-relation uniting the judger with the several terms and universals of his proposition. (Russell's 1910 view is modified to meet Ramsey's criticisms.) There is a discussion of correspondence and coherence, and we are led to the following conclusions. When we believe a false proposition we have before the mind abstract "bits of fact" wrongly combined; when we believe a true proposition the object of our belief does not correspond with a fact—it *is* a fact. Mr. Woozley regards facts as abstractions, mind-dependant—what the mind on a given occasion grasps out of all the things and events with which it is acquainted. What is not mind-dependant is the world of things to which we refer in our judgments. These constitute the real furniture of the world. I do not think Mr. Woozley's statement of his conclusion is satisfactory, though I am sure he is headed in the right direction. It would have been helpful to have considered in detail what happens when we verify an empirical proposition which we have been believing.

The book contains two chapters on memory: surely a good subject for early discussion. There is a chapter on universals which makes one wonder whether it is after all a topic for an elementary book. There is no discussion of *a priori* knowledge, of the difference between intuition and demonstration, nor of the peculiar difficulties of beliefs based on induction. The only omission I regret is the pragmatic theory of truth; this seems to me a good elementary topic and at least as helpful as either of the other theories of truth.

Mr. Woozley's arrangement is good; he knows how to give a discussion a straight run. He writes a decent serviceable style with no attempt at that epigrammatical manner which at Oxford now wells up (or filters down) in such good measure.

Karl Britton.

NEW BOOKS

Greek Philosophy, Volume I, Thales to Plato. By C. J. De Vogel, Ph.D. (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1950. Pp. x + 318.)

This excellent and useful work is a collection of texts, "selected and supplied with some notes and explanations" by the Professor of Ancient and Mediaeval Philosophy in the University of Utrecht. Needless to say, the texts have been quoted in Greek. The notes and brief explanations are in English. For fragments of the Presocratics Professor De Vogel has gone to Diels-Kranz, for selections from Plato to the Budé edition, except in the case of the *Laws*, where Burnet's Oxford edition has been used. There is a useful and up-to-date bibliography; and there are three indices, of names, subjects and Greek words.

Professor De Vogel aimed at compiling a source-book of a more modern stamp than Ritter and Preller; and this volume, together with the second volume, which is due to appear in 1952 and will contain texts from Aristotle and post-Aristotelian philosophy, will provide students of the subject with an excellent instrument. From time to time Professor De Vogel mentions different lines of interpretation which have been advanced, and criticizes or approves them. For example, in connection with texts relating to the Platonic theory of Ideas Natorp's interpretation is briefly mentioned and criticized, while in connection with Plato's political ideas Professor Popper's thesis in *The Open Society and its Enemies* is commented on (adversely). Obviously, brief comments of this kind do not amount to discussions; but they do draw the students' attention to relevant literature and to divergencies of interpretation.

The English is generally excellent; but it is extremely difficult to write in a foreign language without occasionally using an oddly-sounding phrase or word. Before any future edition of the work minor blemishes of this kind might perhaps be attended to. Frederick C. Copleston.

Existence and Being. By Martin Heidegger. (Vision Press. 1949. Pp. 399. Price 15s.)

As Professor Heidegger writes with a more than Heraclitean obscurity, it is all to the good that more than half of this work consists of introductory material supplied by Dr. Werner Brock, who also includes an account of the content of *Sein und Zeit*. The four essays by Heidegger which have been translated are "Remembrance of the Poet" (1944), "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1936), "On the Essence of Truth" (1943) and "What is Metaphysics?" (1929). To the last essay is appended a translation of the postscript added to the fourth edition (1943). Heidegger's additional remarks in the fifth edition (1949) have not been translated. All these essays are commented on by Dr. Brock in his careful introduction.

The famous essay on metaphysics starts with an intelligible question, namely, "What is metaphysics?" It also ends with the (to me at least) intelligible statement that the fundamental question of metaphysics is "Why is there any Being at all—why not far rather Nothing?" (This question, in which the capitals are the translator's, is, as Dr. Brock remarks, a translated quotation from Leibniz. Heidegger's actual question is *Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?* To render *Seiendes* by Being with an initial capital does not seem to me appropriate.) But in the course of one's progress from the first to the final question one comes across some very strange propositions. For example, "The Not does not come into being through negation, but negation is based on the Not, which derives from the nihilation of Nothing." And if we want to know what "nihilation" means, we are told

that "Nihilation is not a fortuitous event; but, understood as the relegation to the vanishing what-is-in-totality, it reveals the latter in all its till now undisclosed strangeness as the pure 'Other'—contrasted with Nothing." Well, if we take it upon ourselves to conduct an "enquiry into Nothing," we must, I suppose, be prepared for some obscurity. But that this sort of language does not appeal to a mind formed in the British philosophical tradition scarcely needs saying.

It is only too easy, of course, to poke fun at utterances of the type quoted above; but it would, I think, be a mistake to regard Heidegger's writings as no better than nonsense. What he is trying to do is to take up afresh the classical problem of metaphysics. The fact that he pursues such an obscure and tortuous path leads his admirers to think that there is more novelty in his philosophy than there seems actually to be. When Heidegger speaks of "nothingness" as revealed in "dread" and of nothingness as not being something alongside of or beyond "what-is-in-totality" but as "at one with it," is he speaking of anything fundamentally different from the apprehension of what was once called "contingency"? Heidegger makes no secret of his indebtedness to classical metaphysics. His method of approach and his language are his own. Whether they are superior to those of his predecessors is, of course, another matter.

It may seem odd that two essays on Hölderlin are included with essays on subjects like truth and metaphysics. But the poet occupies, for Heidegger, a peculiar position. The poet can apprehend in some fashion transcendent being; he can "name the gods" and enter into a sphere where the metaphysician cannot enter. According to Heidegger, the problem of God can be raised only on the plane of "the holy" (whatever the precise meaning of that may be), and the poet, represented by Hölderlin, concerns himself with this sphere. On the philosophical plane Heidegger remains, so far as I am aware, agnostic in regard to God. On the other hand, the poet cannot, as poet, make metaphysical statements.

Any logical positivist who is looking for ammunition to fire off against the metaphysicians cannot do better than buy a copy of this book. Any metaphysician who is dissatisfied with the classical language of metaphysics and is looking for a new tongue might sit up over a succession of cups of black coffee and wrestle with the text of Heidegger. Perhaps he will find what he is looking for. And perhaps not.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON.

The Natural Philosophy of Plant Form. By DR. AGNES ARBER. (Cambridge University Press. Pp. xiv + 246. Price 25s.)

The philosophy of biology has received much less attention from recent writers than the interpretation of physical phenomena, and a very long time has elapsed since an English author produced a book dealing with the problems underlying the study of plant form. This neglect is probably due to a lack of appreciation of the nature of the subject, and to ignorance of the history of ideas which have long been accepted without being fully understood. The biologist cannot neglect philosophy because it is difficult, if not impossible, to study living organisms without some reference to their form and structure. Since it is not possible to bring about any major changes in their structural constitution by experimental treatment, the comparative study of the immense diversity of form which exists in Nature can only be effected by mental processes.

Comprehensive morphological study requires the establishment of some standard of reference for the description and comparison of organisms and

their parts. A similar standard is needed in the classification of species. For more than a century these standards have been provided by the concept of the organization type. The development of this concept was especially due to Goethe, who named his ideal plant the *Urpflanze*, but did not attach any evolutionary significance to the term.

Dr. Agnes Arber in her admirable book traces the main currents of thought about the form of plants from the times of Aristotle to the present day. She pays special attention to Goethe, and enables her readers to reach a fuller insight into the ideas which he put forward. These ideas have been imperfectly understood in England, probably owing to the difficulty of translating some of the terms which he used. Her work is, however, more than a critical and historical study for she develops an important new concept of plant structure. Her long-continued studies of plant morphology and anatomy have led her to the generalization that the phyllomes, or leaves, of the flowering plants should be regarded as partial shoots.

Throughout the book plant form is treated from the viewpoint of idealistic philosophy; the materialistic approach to plant structure, introduced by the theory of evolution, plays little or no part in her argument. She exposes the fallacy of the view, so widely held during the past seventy years, that the *Urpflanze* of the pre-evolutionary morphologists is to be regarded as identical with the ancestral form from which all the flowering plants are thought to have evolved. This erroneous idea is quite unsupported by evidence, but having been asserted categorically by a famous botanist in a textbook widely used by university students during the first quarter of the present century, it has been accepted as axiomatic. Unfortunately the philosophy of Natural Science has been much neglected in the training of biologists, consequently few of them understand the meaning of the concept of an organization type. For this reason the study of plant form has been somewhat discredited, and at the same time the historical study of plant evolution is often thought to have failed, because it has not led to the discovery of any organism resembling the *Urpflanze* of the philosophers.

The publication of the present work should be welcomed because it makes clear the nature and origin of the views which, in one form or another, are presented to every student of plant life. It demonstrates the role of philosophy in biology, and illuminates the supposed antithesis between teleological and mechanistic biology. It provides a challenge to those who consider that plant form is best understood by reference to the theory of evolution. Can they provide a system of thought which is comparable in reliability and utility with the classical system here outlined?

Many of the well-known philosophers of the past were much interested in the problems presented by the forms of plants. It may be that the subject has now become too technical to interest those who have not had a training in botany. The excellent drawings with which Mrs. Arber has illustrated her book should, however, help the reader to appreciate much of her argument; they add considerably to its value, as do the admirable index and the full list of the works cited in the text. H. Hamshaw Thomas.

Books also received:

S. L. Frank, Editor. *A Solovyov Anthology*. London: Student Christian Movement Press. 1950. Pp. 256. 18s.

M. C. V. Jeffries. *Glaucon: An Enquiry into the Aims of Education*. London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd. 1950. Pp. x + 173. 12s. 6d.

SIEGFRIED FISCHER. *Principles of General Psychopathology. An Interpretation of the Theoretical Foundations of Psychopathological Concepts.* New York: Philosophical Library. Pp. xxi + 327. $4.75.

G. BURNISTON BROWN. *Science, Its Method and Its Philosophy.* London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 189. 15s.

MARTIN BUBER. *The Way of Man: According to the Teaching of Hasidim.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1950. Pp. 46. 4s. 6d.

MAURICE CORNFORTH. *In Defence of Philosophy; against Pragmatism and Positivism.* London: Lawrence & Wishart. 1950. Pp. xv + 260. 12s. 6d.

SRI RAMANASRAMAN, Editor. *Golden Jubilee Souvenir.* Sri Niranjanananda. 1940. Pp. 376 + xiv. £1 16s.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN. *The Dhammapada* (with notes, Palī text and translation). London: Oxford University Press. 1950. Pp. viii + 194. 12s. 6d.

PITIRIM A. SOROKIN. *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis.* The Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. 1950. Pp. xi + 345. $4.00.

VINCENT EDWARD SMITH. *Idea-Men of Today.* The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee (Wis.). 1950. Pp. x + 434. $5.00.

MARIE LOUISE BERNERI. *Journey Through Utopia.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1950. Pp. xi + 339. 16s.

FREDERICK MAYER. *Essentialism.* American Philosophy Series. London: Hamilton Hall Press. 1950. Pp. 223. 7s. 6d.

H. N. SPALDING. *Poem of Praise.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1950. Pp. 72. 7s. 6d.

PAUL E. JOHNSON. *Christian Love.* New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. 1950. Pp. 240. $3.00.

HOWARD C. MCELROY. *Modern Philosophers: Western Thought since Kant.* New York: Russell F. Moore Co. 1950. Pp. xii + 268. $4.00.

A. P. D'ENTRÈVES. *Natural Law.* London: Hutchinson's University Library. 1951. Pp. 126. 7s. 6d.

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ANTONY G. N. FLEW, Editor. *Essays on Logic and Language.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1951. Pp. vii + 206. 16s.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1949–1950. New Series, Vol. L. London: Harrison & Sons. 1950. Pp. 214. 30s.

DAGOBERT D. RUNES, Editor. *The Hebrew Impact on Western Civilization.* New York: Philosophical Library. 1951. Pp. xiv + 922. $10.00.

ERNEST NAGEL, Editor. *John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Scientific Method.* New York: Haffner Publishing Co. 1950. Pp. xlviii + 461. $2.50.

KURT VON FRITZ and ERNST KAPP. (Trans. and Introduction.) *Aristotle's Constitution of Athens, and Related Texts.* New York: Haffner Publishing Co. 1950. Pp. xii + 233. $1.25.

KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA. *Object Content and Relation.* Calcutta: Das Gupta & Co., Ltd. 1950. Pp. 160. No price stated.

WARNER ALLEN. *The Uncurtained Throne.* London: Faber & Faber. 1951. Pp. 217. 12s. 6d.

GREGORY DEXTER WALCOTT. *The Rationality of the World.* New York: Barnes & Noble. 1950. Pp. 64. $–.75.

J. B. RHINE. *Telepathy and Human Personality.* The Tenth Frederic W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture, 1950. London: Society for Psychical Research. Pp. 39. 1s. 6d.

OTTO RANK. *Psychology and the Soul.* (Trans., William D. Turner). Pennsylvania University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1950. Pp. viii + 196. 28s.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. *The Psychology of the Imagination.* London: Rider & Co. 1950. Pp. vi + 222. 15s.

J. OLIVER BUSWELL, JNR. *The Philosophies of F. R. Tenant and John Dewey.* New York Philosophical Library. 1950. Pp. xvii + 516. $6.00.

RUPERT C. LODGE. *Applied Philosophy.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd. 1951. Pp. xi + 243. 14s.

MORRIS WEITZ. *Philosophy of the Arts.* Harvard University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1950. Pp. xi + 239. 25s.

EVA INGERSOLL WAKEFIELD, Editor. *The Letters of Robert G. Ingersoll.* New York Philosophical Library. 1951. Pp. xii + 747. $7.50.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD. *Versus: Reflections of a Sociologist.* New York Philosophical Library. 1951. Pp. xvii + 203. $3.75.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD. *The Prodigal Century.* New York Philosophical Library. 1951. Pp. xvii + 258. $3.75.

JOHN HOLLOWAY. *Language and Intelligence.* London: Macmillan & Co. 1951. Pp. xv + 192. 12s. 6d.

GABRIEL BUESCHER. *The Eucharistic Teaching of William Ockham.* New York: Franciscan Institute Publications. 1950. Pp. xxvii + 173. No price stated.

ANGELUS GROSSE-ASCHHOFF. *The Negotiations Between Ch'I-Ying and Lagrené.* New York: Franciscan Institute Publications. 1950. Pp. 195. No price stated.

RUTH LYDIA SAW. *The Vindication of Metaphysics; A Study in the Philosophy of Spinoza.* London: Macmillan & Co. 1951. Pp. 173. 12s. 6d.

HERBERT DINGLE, Editor. *A Century of Science.* London: Hutchinsons Scientific and Technical Publications. 1951. Pp. ix + 338. 15s.

ANDRÉ CRESSON. *Le Mécanisme de L'Esprit.* Paris: Collection Armand Colin. 1950. Pp. 220. Fr. fr. 280.

PAUL SIWEK. *Spinoza et le Panthéisme Religieux.* Paris: Desclée De Brouwer et Cie. 1950. Pp. xxxiv + 309. No price stated.

JACQUES DELESALLE. *Liberté et Valeur.* Publications Universitaires de Louvain. 1950. Pp. 242. Belg. Frs. 65.

PAUL SIWEK, S.J. *Une Stigmatisée de nos Jours. Etude de psychologie religieuese.* Paris: P. Lethielleux. 1950. Pp. 174. Fr. fr. 325.

KARL KERÉNYI. *Labyrinth-Studien.* Zürich: Rhein-Verlag. (Albae Vigiliae.) 1950. Pp. 72, Swiss Fr. 8.00.

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RICHARD THURNWALD. *Der Mensch Geringer Naturbeherrschung: Sein Aufstieg zwischen Vernunft und Wahn.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1950. Pp. 157. DM. 4.80.

HERMAN WEIN. *Das Problem des Relativismus.* Berlin: Walter Gruyter verlag. 1950. Pp. 126. DM. 7.50.

NICCOLA ABBAGNANO. *Storia della Filosofia.* Vols. I and III. Turin: Unione Tipografico Editrice Torinese. 1950. Pp. xix + 570, and ix + 487. Lire 3300 and 3000.

GAETANO MEGLIO. *La Filosofia dell'Infinito.* Milan: Fratelli Bocca. 1951. Pp. 247. L. 650.

GUIDO MORPURGO TAGLIABUE. *Le Strutture del Trascendale.* Milan: Fratelli Bocca. 1951. Pp. 368. L. 900.

DR. D. H. TH. VOLLENHOVEN. *Geschiedenis der Wijsbegeerte: 1. Griekse Philosophie.* Franeker: T. Wever. 1950. Pp. 618. D. Guilders 25.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Iyer Lecture

A lecture entitled "Some Aspects of the Theory of Knowledge" will be given by Professor C. D. Broad, of the University of Cambridge, at University Hall, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1, on Friday, June 8th, at 5.15 p.m.

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Applications from candidates should be sent to *The Secretary, Perrott Studentship Electors, Trinity College, Cambridge*, not later than April 30, 1951. Intending candidates should write to the Secretary for further details before applying.

The election to the Studentship will take place in the Easter Term of 1951, and, if a candidate be elected, his tenure will begin at Michaelmas following the election.

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